'r. Hillman Baits the Trap BY ADAM LAPIN

FIFTEEN CENTS

December 24, 1940

NEW MASSES

Intrigue Below the Rio Grande

A REPORT FROM MEXICO

by Joseph North

What Hitler Didn't Say

by A. B. MAGIL

RUTH McKENNEY, HARRY F. WARD, GROPPER, MICHAELS, SORIANO

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Between Ourselves

SOME of the articles we have on hand can't be presented to you as Christmas gifts, since they won't be published until after Xmas, but perhaps the announcement will add a few degrees of warmth to the holiday cheer. We will follow Joseph North's articles on Mexico with a series of three by Samuel Putnam on the deeply important subject of Latin-American cultural developments and their relation to the United States. Mr. Putnam, whose previous articles and literary criticism are familiar to NM readers, is one of the editors of *The Handbook of Latin-American Study,* published annually by the Harvard University Press. He is a member of the Inter-American Bibliographical and Library Association. Mr. Putnam participated in the 1939 Conference on Inter-American Relations in the field of publications and libraries. He has written and translated many books.

Also on hand is a short story by Alvah Bessie which we regard as one of the finest pieces of fiction that has come into our office. Titled "Call [illegible] the story, although com[illegible]tself, is the first chapter of [illegible]hich Mr. Bessie is writing in between reviewing plays for NM. He is the author of a published novel, *Dwell in the Wilderness,* and of the popular book on Spain, *Men in Battle.*

NM readers who want to carry over and express a genuine peace-and-good-will from Christmas to January 5 will have a wonderful opportunity to do so on the latter date—and at the same time see the premiere of Marc Blitzstein's new musical operetta, *No For an Answer.* For the benefit of the first American Rescue Ship Mission, to save the 150,000 Spanish refugee members of the International Brigade in French concentration camps, the operetta will be performed at Manhattan's Mecca Temple on Sunday evening, January 5. A note on Mr. Blitzstein's latest operetta (you remember his *Cradle Will Rock,* of course) is furnished us by the New York chapter of the United American Spanish Aid Committee, which is sponsoring this benefit premiere. Says the committee: "With a company of forty Equity players, including twenty principals and a chorus of twenty, the opera has taken three years to write and is being eagerly awaited by the public. The show's setting is in a small resort town after the season has ended, and concerns a Greek hotel workers' club which has formed a choral group. Mr. Blitzstein himself will stage the music and W. E. Watts will stage the book."

Day by day we are picking up a little more information on the rigadoon—that strange-sounding dance which NM will introduce at its New Year's Eve Party. Last week we told you it was a French jig. Now we are able to inform you that the word "rigadoon" means, in old French, "jamboree." Next week we hope to present fuller explanations. The important fact right now, however, is that this new dance, with new lyrics, will be introduced and demonstrated by a pair of professional dancers on Tuesday evening, December 31, at Manhattan Center, 34th Street and 8th Avenue. Frankie Newton and his Major Jive Boys will swing for you and, for *lagniappe'* (French, too—meaning "extra") NM's party offers a brilliant floor show. Tickets, $1.00 in advance (plus tax), $1.25 at the door; on sale at NM offices, 461 Fourth Avenue, at Manhattan Center, the Workers Bookshop, Bookfair, and Leblang's ticket agency, 43rd Street and Broadway.

Our Lecture Bureau announces two speaking dates for the near future. The subject in both cases is current events—with A. B. Magil talking at the Brighton Community Center, 3200 Coney Island Ave., Brooklyn, on Sunday, December 22, at 8:30 PM; and Joseph Starobin, NM editorial writer on foreign affairs, speaking in Woodbridge, N. Y., also on December 22.

From Stockholm, Sweden, J. T. writes us:

"The climate is getting kind of chilly in Sweden now. The official politics of this country are getting more reactionary than ever. I won't say, though, that the people are approving the occupation by telephone that Germany is now performing against Sweden. The elections for the *Riksdag* showed other tendencies.

"In this atmosphere a group of intellectuals *("Clarte")* are intending to start a paper of about the same technical and political appearance as your NEW MASSES. I dare not say that our paper will be of the same high class, but we'll try to do our best. If we're able to collect the necessary funds our magazine will appear in about a month. In case you're willing to swap magazines, please send us NEW MASSES regularly and in return we'll send our paper as soon as we're able to.

"Formerly we have always read NEW MASSES in the reading room of the public library of Stockholm (Stockholm's *Stadsbibliotek).* Last winter, however, your paper was removed from the reading room, but we're still able to borrow it from the library. (During the Finnish war we were not even able to borrow it.)"

When an article by R. Palme Dutt appears in NM, the magazine is scarcely two days on the newsstands before we begin to get letters of congratulation. His analysis in last week's issue of Anglo-American policy has especially caused a stir, and practically everyone who has written us about it wants to know when more of R. Palme Dutt's writings can be expected to appear in our pages. The answer is that Mr. Dutt has promised to send us other articles shortly; when they will arrive in our office is, of course, dependent upon the situation as regards communications from abroad.

Flashbacks

IN ONE of the most famous anti-Semitic frame-ups in history, Alfred Dreyfuss, a Jewish officer in the French army, was condemned to life imprisonment Dec. 22, 1894, accused falsely of selling military secrets. . . . As the pro-war propaganda machine begins to give us everything it's got, we are reminded of the steps that led us into the first imperialist war. On Dec. 21, 1916, Secretary Lansing declared that the "United States is drawing nearer to the verge of war," later den[illegible] any change in o[illegible] was contemplate[illegible] born Dec. 21, 1879. . . . Jam[illegible] Ford, Communist Vice-Presid[illegible] candidate, was born Dec. 22, 189[illegible] Pratt City, Ala. . . . On Dec. [illegible] 1887, a certain magistrate in Ka[illegible] Russia, said to a young student [illegible] had been called before him [illegible] other students for demanding cert[illegible] rights, "What do you want to [illegible] about making disturbances for, you[illegible] man? Can't you see you're up agai[illegible] a wall?" "Yes," the young m[illegible] (though being sent into exile) [illegible] swered, "it's a wall, but a rot[illegible] one. Push it, and over it will g[illegible] The young man's name was Len[illegible]

Who's Who

DR. HARRY F. WARD is one of t[illegible] leading members of the facu[illegible] at Union Theological Seminary, [illegible] formerly chairman of the Ameri[illegible] Civil Liberties Union, and is [illegible] author of numerous books. . . . Fra[illegible] H. Lewis is a free-lance journalist [illegible] the West Coast. . . . Adam Lapin[illegible] NM's Washington corresponde[illegible] . . . Frances Steuben is a dancer a[illegible] critic.

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Two weeks' notice is required for change of address. Notification sen[illegible] to NEW MASSES rather than to the post office will give the best results.

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NEW MASSES

VOLUME XXXVIII DECEMBER 24, 1940 NUMBER 1

Intrigue Below the Rio Grande

Joseph North's report on Mexico after journeying 1,500 miles through that country. Why Mr. Wallace attended Camacho's inauguration. Plot of the Polo-Playing Generals. First of a series.

Mexico City.

"Poor Mexico! So far from God and so near the United States." Latin American maxim.

THE adobe huts of La Paz (Peace) gleamed in the subtropical sun of La Laguna up in the state of Coahuila where the cotton grows in lands as rich as those along the Nile. A few long-eared donkeys rolled in the dusty road like dogs; flies droned overhead and almond-eyed babies in long skirts watched us as we entered the village. It was late Monday afternoon and the sun was beginning to set behind the bleak mountains on the horizon of the vast plain. The day's work was ended and the men of La Paz, in sombreros, lounged in the street across from the general store where a picture of the Dionne quintuplets jarred the Biblical appearance of the scene. Across the roadway was the ancient manor of the expropriated *hacendado*—the big landowner—who had moved into the nearby metropolis of Torreon after the lands went to his farmhands in 1937. Above the great gateway was the old slogan *"Dios con Nosotros"*—God Be With Us. The ancient church-bells were tolling when we got to the cross-roads and women were entering church for special services. They came in black shawls, and our friend, the agronomist, told us the padre was conducting more masses lately than the people had meals. We listened to the hymns until the padre became nervous and sent an emissary out to us at the doorway who volunteered to guide us to the next village, or in fact anywhere we wanted to go so long as we didn't hang around his church. We apologized and went off to the rural school in the one-story adobe shack where some sixty children sat, many of them in cheap, make-believe aviators' helmets, droning their lessons. (All of them, their teacher said deprecatingly, wanted to be aviators.) Their teacher was one of those intrepid women who went out to teach the ABC's in the countryside despite the threats of the fanatical *Cristeroes,* who captured some of them from time to time and burned them at the stake. She was very proud to show off her ragged class to us and they did intricate sums on the wooden blackboard, and wound up singing us the song they all loved, "The Romance of the Oil Expropriation." They also sang the song of the "Death of Sarabia"—their beloved aviator who had crashed in Washington several years ago after a good-will flight to the United States. Nonetheless they were extremely gracious, understanding that we didn't represent any oil companies but were *companeros* as they were.

AGRARIAN REFORM

Here in La Laguna, where some 45,000 *ejidal* (cooperative or communal) farmers lived, beat the heart of Mexico's agrarian reform. We had come here, twenty-six hours by rail from Mexico City, to see for ourselves how the Mexican felt about what was going on, for Mexico City was no more Mexico than Washington was Iowa. Oh yes, they knew Meester Wallace (they pronounced it Vayase) was on his way down to Camacho's inaugural ceremonies but they weren't thinking much about that. The question here was a commingling of the timeless worry for water to moisten their seeds and the newfangled concern for capital with which to work their lands. They had come a long way from the turbulent days of the cotton-pickers' strike in 1936 when the local *hacendadoes* had sent out the plug-uglies to pump lead into their leaders to break the rebellion for a few cents more a day, for better housing, and for medical services. Now they had schools where the children could sing lustily the song of the oil expropriation and learn their sums. They had the right to organize, to band into their own economic organizations, and they felt they had come quite a way. The sombreroed men crowded around the doorway of the primitive schoolhouse and they, too, watched with admiration the little brown boys vying at the blackboard to see who would first complete those sums which made their visitors dizzy. Proudly they told us their plans to build a real schoolhouse with purple tile over the doorway and they led us to the clay bricks piled up for that purpose. "We couldn't finish the schoolhouse this year because the water was too scarce to make the bricks. But next year we'll have it," they said confidently. The women, black braids hanging down their backs over the ubiquitous shawl, showed us the new contraption which had revolutionized their lives—a mill to grind the corn kernel. For centuries (the women of Montezuma's time worked the same way) they had sat the best part of the day smashing the corn with stone-age implements and now the job could be done with this demon machine which they loved. The building which houses this *molino* (mill) was their capitol and proclamations of public concern were pasted on the walls. Bright posters warning of the ancient plagues and the ravages of alcoholism hung everywhere; posters that told of venereal disease and the menace of the house-fly, posters that described the advantage of bringing children into the world in hospitals under doctors' care rather than in the huts with medieval midwives at the bedside.

MODERN CONQUISTADORES

The men took us through their arduously tended fields, described the process of agriculture inspired by indefatigable irrigation. They knew their job (knew, too, the crucial need for capital), and they were always speaking of next season, next year, and the year after, when things would be better, their troubles would be straightened out. They spoke of their ambitions, their aspirations, the modest aspirations of the people: new schools, shoes for their children, a bright colored cloth for their women, hospitals for their sick. All their hopes were based upon the soil remaining in their control, their country remaining at peace, their government remaining one that represented the people's will. While they spoke with us, hopefully, making your heart beat hard with the sense of their eager ambitions for a life that included the barest necessities, men in high silk hats were crossing their borders, bowing and smiling, speaking of great love for their country. While we were at the Laguna, Mr. Wallace was crossing the international bridge at Laredo, the bands played "The Star Spangled Banner" and the Mexican National Hymn.

The modern conquistadores were coming down by Pan American Airways and by rail and motor. Cortez had to chance the hazards of a trackless Atlantic in his galleons but these newfangled corsairs made it practically overnight from Pennsylvania Avenue. I returned from the Laguna to Mexico City in time to see them crowd into the palace Cortez had built some four centuries ago on the famous square of the Zocalo. Sleek, streamlined cars sped past the ancient tolling cathedral bearing the ambassadors of Good Will through the eerily silent crowds. Mr. Wallace arrived in something of a daze: he seemed not to have fully recovered from the hostile Almazanista demonstration before the Ameri-

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can Embassy the day of his arrival. David Dubinsky was on hand to give the Mexican people the impression that American labor was implicated in Wall Street's profession of eternal love. Mayor Maury Maverick cavorted like a cow-puncher LaGuardia. And elegantly, in the background, stood Patrick J. Hurley, Secretary of War under Hoover, now minister plenipotentiary for the big American oil interests.

"MEESTER VAYASE"

Thus they came with protestations of affection and with dreams of gold to the land where the flag carries the symbol of an eagle strangling a snake. But behind the flumdummery of protocol, the bivouac of arms was stacked. The Mexicans knew it and the Americans, though nobody was saying anything about it. But the irrepressible people who hadn't studied the artfulness of diplomacy were speaking their minds. All over town the folk were pronouncing Mr. Wallace's name in the Mexican way: Meester Vayase, which means Mr. Scram, in Spanish.

I had hastened back to the capital in time to see the officialdom of Mexico going through the pomp of diplomatic double-talk with the representatives of the world's imperialisms who had gathered to woo President-elect Avila
ıo and see if he "could be had." I stayed
ough to learn a great deal. I was there
lmazan followers swarmed around the embassy and rowdily greeted Mr. Wallace with showers of used electric light bulbs. Some of his followers tried to convince several newspapermen that Almazan was a prisoner of the government, had been brought down by twenty Mexican Secret Service men from the United States, and that the American government had turned over their hero to Camacho's policemen. "That is the reason for the demonstration," one of them said to me. When I asked him why Almazan had publicly, in yesterday's press, repudiated his followers' march on the embassy, this man said the Monterrey general did so only on the threat of death. "He is Camacho's prisoner," he said. That was the story that went the rounds of the disgruntled Almazan followers. But in higher circles one heard that Almazan was quite free to go where he pleased and do what he wished. He was quoted as saying privately, "In losing, we won."

I was in Mexico City, too, when the assault occurred upon the headquarters of the Communist Party and saw how eagerly the press of that country and their colleagues north of the Rio Grande leaped to the telegraph offices with a story of a plot to assassinate Camacho and Wallace that has been proved totally false. I have yet to see a retraction of that tale. It was my good fortune, during this stay in our neighboring land, to be invited to La Laguna where I learned how the people of Mexico felt, in contradistinction to their officialdom. I shall speak more fully of that in a forthcoming article. For it is the farmers, the 70 percent of Mexico's population, upon whom the ultimate decision of capitulation to *imperialismo Yanqui* rests. And what I saw in the countryside is the brightest picture in the scene.

The swift intervention of American imperialism is the chief phenomenon in Mexico's political picture today. From this everything else stems. Nobody in Mexico is being fooled by what's happening. Nobody can tell a Mexican that the silk hats from above the Rio Grande bode good. But there are those in Mexico who would agree to surrender if they could retain the position of overseer for the overlord. This is the camp represented by such men as Portes Gil and Abelardo Rodriguez, both former provisional presidents under ex-dictator Calles' thumb the early part of the past decade. Portes Gil is a corporation lawyer closely associated with Wall Street; he has close ties, too, with leaders in the agrarian community. Rodriguez is said to be the richest man in Mexico, a sort of super-Capone with big gambling concessions in lower California. Both were completely subservient to Calles in the latter's heyday and acted as puppet presidents for the man who later fled across the Rio Grande with a copy of *Mein Kampf* under his arm. Now they are close friends of our State Department. These are the men in the ascendancy in Mexico at this moment. What I wrote some six months ago on my last trip to that country is now verified fully: that reaction would gain if the progressive forces about the Confederation of Mexican Labor did not go on the immediate offensive. They did not do so and reaction is on the march. But it hasn't reached its goal.

Native reaction was stimulated by the fierce, undercover drive of American imperialism. Our State Department's tactic of at first withholding recognition of Camacho as against Almazan had worked well. Camacho ceded ground. The reactionary governors of the Mexican states put pressure on him to move toward the right. They sought an end to land reform and now work to decentralize the PRM, the Party of the Mexican Revolution, and to whittle it to their shape. The fifth columnists within the PRM worked cagily, shrewdly, directed by Portes Gil. The hierarchy of the Church, long biding its time, ventured a fervent endorsement of Camacho the day after his election. In the six months since I last saw Mexico, reaction has made indubitable gains.

Of course, American progressives will understand that such publications as Mr. Luce's *Time* and *Life* are printing biased stories of the Mexican scene and of Camacho. According to them Mexico is practically lock, stock, and barrel in the hands of the "hemisphere defensists." It is not at all as simple as that. Camacho has gone to the right, indeed yes, but his direction is not solely up to him. Another slight factor must be taken into consideration: namely, the people. How far Camacho will go to the right depends upon a number of circumstances. It is true that his Cabinet represents a great gain for reaction. But it still includes men associated with the reforms of the Cardenas period. That is indicative of the fear of the masses. Camacho's Cabinet represents an attempt to satisfy the Cardenistas as well as the growing reaction. But obviously the right wing of the PRM has had a big day. None can gainsay that. Portes Gil men hold most important portfolios; for example, agriculture. In a country predominantly rural, the post of agriculture is the most important of domestic assignments. Marte R. Gomez has been chosen minister of that work and Fernando Foglio heads the Agrarian Department which is devoted to all problems concerning *ejidos* (the communally and cooperatively operated farmlands). Both these men are collaborators of Portes Gil. Senor Gomez was head of agriculture once before in one of the Calles administrations. On the other hand, men associated with the Cardenas tradition are also in the Cabinet. Ignacio Garcia Tellez, former Minister of Interior, now heads the Labor Department. The new Minister of Education is Dr. Luis Sanchez Ponton, a Cardenista. Gen. Heriberto Jara, formerly president of the PRM, is in charge of the newly created Cabinet post of the Navy Department. Eduardo Suarez, Cardenas Minister of Finance, has retained his post. Nonetheless, this cabinet is nothing for Mexican progressives to crow over.

It includes men groomed by the reactionary governors; men who can play ball with the representatives of the oil companies, the foreign interests, the promoters of imperialism. These are men who, in the main, would dispense with the agrarian reforms of Cardenas' time.

PEACEFUL PENETRATION

I recall a revealing conversation in a train heading toward Torreon with a shoe manufacturer from Leon, a man who had a hundred workers in his establishment. He described himself as a "progressive capitalist, about this much," and he raised his forefinger several inches from his thumb. He evidenced a complete fatalism on the question of ceding military and naval bases to the United States. "They're strong enough to get what they want up there," he said, waving vaguely toward the north. He spoke his fear that Mexican sovereignty would be violated. "It's peaceful penetration," he laughed. "They do it peacefully because they can do it with tanks and we have no tanks." I asked if he feared a Nazi invasion. Again he laughed. "Invade Mexico? They can't cross twenty-one miles of British channel, how will they cross the Atlantic to invade us? That," he said, "is nonsense. Propaganda. But America wants bases and she will take them whether we give them to her or not." I asked him about Camacho. "Much better than Cardenas," he said. "That man is a dunce." His hostility to Cardenas indicated where the reactionary governors of the various states drew their strength: from a nascent bourgeoisie made up of men like these. "Cardenas wanted to kill the goose that laid the golden eggs," he said to me. "He wanted to do away with us capitalists. You can't expect prosperity in Mexico by killing off the cause of that prosperity." Then he spoke of the great need for capital in Mexico. Camacho,

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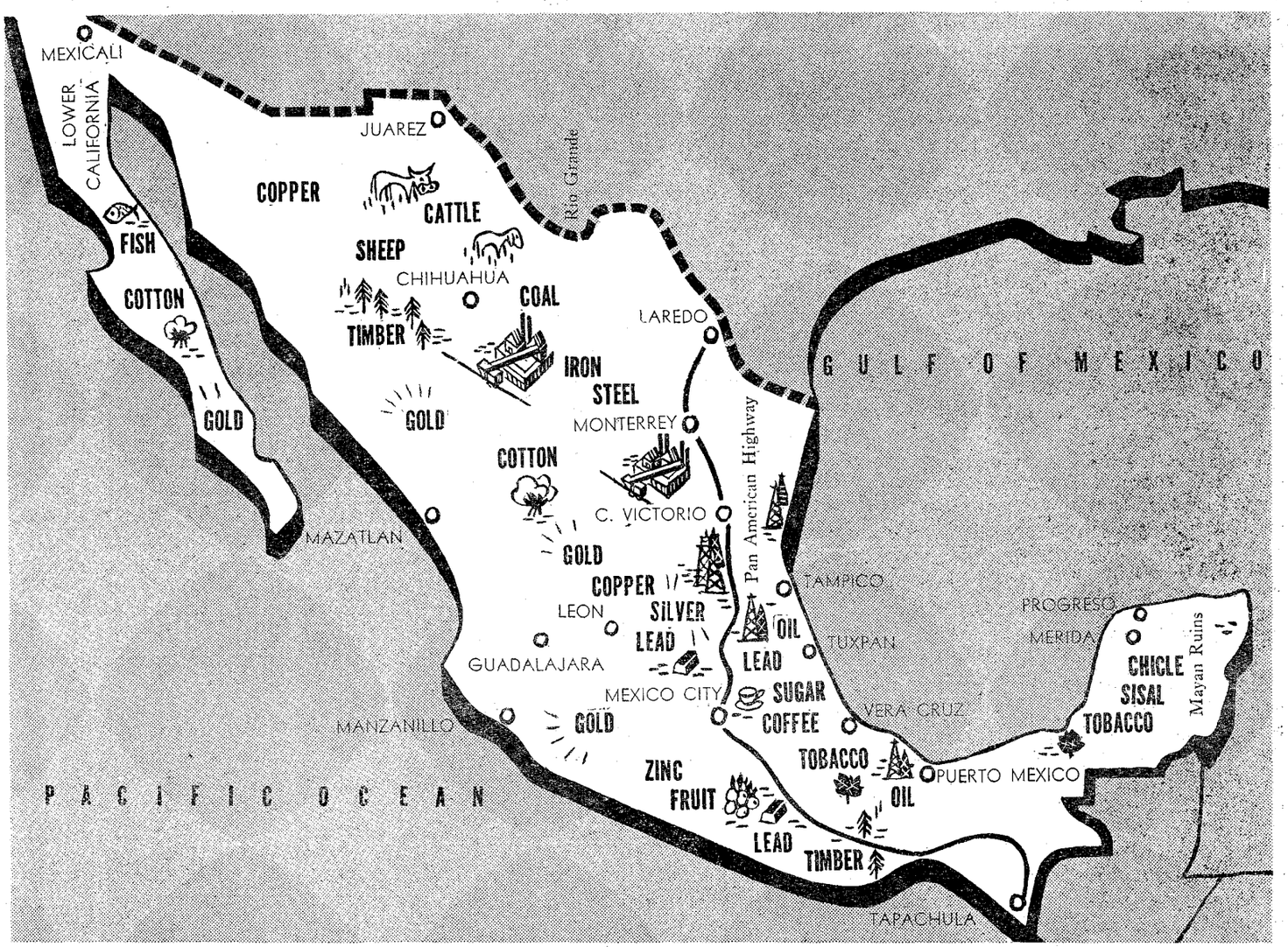
it seems, hopes to get that from the United States. "But wouldn't that endanger the independence of your country?" I asked. He said it would not if the Americans observed the Mexican laws. I said that was begging the question. "Did you ever see a time when capital observed any laws but its own?" He grinned. However, he thought that since the United States was going to war, perhaps it couldn't afford to lose the good will of Mexicans and therefore it would stick to contract, and thus the Mexicans could borrow capital, open up the country to American investments, and still retain their national independence. I asked what he thought of the chances for that? He shrugged his shoulders. *"Quien sabe?* But anything is better than Cardenas."

"GOOD NEIGHBORISM"

All the foregoing opinions, shared by foreign as well as native capitalists, account for the rash of magazine covers in the United States carrying Camacho's picture last week. The promoters of imperialism hoped he was already in their pockets. They have fine ambitions for him. Perhaps he will play the role in 1941 that Gerardo Machado played a decade ago in Cuba. Machado, you recall, had labored tirelessly for Electric Bond & Share, had bought up an entire congress to help Wall Street take over the public utilities of his land. But this is a different day; and Mexico is another country. Men are alive who fought with Zapata and his cry *"Tierra y libertad"* is not forgotten. Our administration, now embarked upon imperialistic expansion on a scale that would put Cecil Rhodes and other British empire builders to shame, understands that the key to Latin America is Mexico. For that nation, unfortunately "so near the United States," has set the goal for the other hundred millions in Latin America. If Mexico can be cracked, our State Department reasons, it will be easier all the way down the line to Tierra del Fuego in Argentina. But the job must be done with the apparent consent of the people. For if it were done by force of arms (after all, the colossus of the North could descend on Mexico with fire and sword) the hundred millions of Hispano America would be aroused into an anti-imperialist crusade that would create insurmountable obstacles for *imperialismo Yanqui.* Hence, the care and the caution; hence the treacly professions of Good Neighborism.

The menace of Nazi imperialism to Mexico has been blown up to scarifying proportions by the press well-oiled with Yankee money. Even the trade union daily, CTM's *El Popular,* fell for the propaganda. Though it rightly recognized Nazi plots, saw Sinarquistas rearing their bandit heads in the mountains, saw Almazanistas threatening the foundations of the state, it saw every danger but the greatest one—that of Wall Street. One would think from the Mexican press that the Luftwaffe was about to descend upon the Zocalo any moment. Which is not to say that Nazis are not operating in Mexico. They are. But Yankee imperialism, so much nearer and so much stronger, is infinitely the greater danger to Mexican independence today. The propaganda for military bases is furious, and undoubtedly certain agreements have already been secretly reached by the Camacho administration; but those officials in the government ready to cede must take the people into account. *Hoy,* the *Saturday Evening Post* of



MEXICO, *one-third the area of the United States, is inhabited by 20,000,000, 70 percent of whom till the soil. Rockefeller Oil has never forgiven the expropriation of 1938. Nor has Royal Dutch Shell, which forced the British government to break off relations with the Cardenas regime. American jingoes today are applying terrific pressure to undermine all popular gains since the agrarian revolution of 1910. Negotiations are under way to force the Camacho government to cede bases for military and naval purposes on both the Pacific and Atlantic coasts. The Mexican people fear such concessions will undermine their sovereignty, render their country another Latin-American vassal state.*

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Mexico, put the question in classic form the week Mr. Wallace arrived. It preached capitulation to American imperialism, but it had to take into account the thorough-going antagonism to Wall Street extant throughout the land. It did so for two reasons: first, to warn the American bigshots that the job cannot be done in a twinkle, that they must reckon with a hard people; and second, to supply a demagogic base to convince Mexicans they must surrender to an enemy "infinitely stronger" than they. The passage is so illuminating that it should be quoted at some length.

Hoy takes for granted that "its powerful neighbor" will join in the "dreadful adventure" of the European war. Then it recounts "all the raw deals" Mexico has suffered at the hands of the Northern colossus. Its recital of wrongs begins back in the time of Mr. Poinsett, who stirred up "our internal quarrels" and led to the "unjust war of 1846" which "robbed" Mexico of "half our territory." The article spoke bitterly of the attack on Vera Cruz in 1916, of the invasion of Chihuahua by Blackjack Pershing in 1916, of the "Treaty of Bucareli where North American interests won the legitimate titles of Mexicans." It recalls the airplanes and other war materials sent to "impose General Calles on us as president." Revealing, too, is its characterization of Ambassador Morrow's appointed duties. "His friendship for the latter (Calles) made it possible for him to enslave the whole nation with impunity for ten long years."

And here the article is perhaps most significant: *"With what has gone before, no one should be astonished that many thousands (and perhaps millions) of Mexicans are averse to the very thought of uniting with the United States."* [My emphasis, J. N.] But being the organ of the top stratum of Mexican capital it comes to the following conclusions:

> The undeniable fact is that as long as we cannot emigrate to other parts of the planet—since they are already occupied—we cannot free ourselves from the obligations imposed upon us by geography. We are irretrievably bound to the interests of our formidable neighbor, and so, whether we want to or not, must get along with her. Our foreign policy must be directed to harmonize and not to counteract that of the United States. . . .

Thus the preachment of submission, consent to a state of slavery so long as those on top in Mexico may be able to act as overseers for the invader. But the writer makes a further revealing statement: "It is clear, of course, that the gallery demands something else." Indeed, here is the basis of all the worry. The "gallery" —read "the common people"—has something else in mind. It is the fear of that "gallery" that impels the United States to move cautiously today and that induces those in Mexico who stand for retreat and capitulation to cloak it in sophistry and rationalization. This popular reaction is not totally absent in top circles. It accounts for the credence given the story in the capital that when the question of bases was discussed recently in the Cabinet before Camacho became president, Interior Minister Garcia Tellez said, "It is preferable to die wrapped in the fatherland's flag than to accept such conditions." And the conditions? They are said to be (and the report is probably quite accurate) that Washington is stumping for the merger of all Mexican indebtedness to the United States into one single, interest-paying debt (sufficient to mortgage Mexico for decades to Wall Street); to pledge the Mexican government not to expropriate without advance payment of "adequate compensation"; and last but not least, to force the Camacho administration to permit the United States to build and control naval and airbases for the American military.

THE OPPOSITION MOVEMENT

Naturally, there are many in Mexico vastly disturbed at the trend of the times. Already one can see manifold evidences of an opposition movement maturing, one that includes the firmest elements of the Cardenas regime, men who refused to surrender the popular gains of the past five years. Cardenas himself recently spoke of the re-formation of the reactionary front and of the need to defend the gains of the Revolution. He lashed out against the inroads made by the native reactionaries and fascists, excoriated the plottings of international imperialism. I spoke with a man who had been closely associated with Cardenas and he felt that the ex-president would not retire to his beloved Michoacan to raise hogs and plant maize. "He can't take a vacation," he told me. "Today's crisis will not allow him that luxury. He must remain in public life to defend all that his people have gained in his six years of office." Honest men of all strata were being stirred to action at what they saw before them: they were applying pressure upon President Camacho from the left. The latter, wavering between the push of reaction and the pull of the people, was straddling, trying to reconcile the two. This accounts for his prompt action in the recent case of the Communists. The circumstances of this episode are revealing of the forces operating behind the Mexican scene and since none of the commercial newspapers has printed the true details, I shall recount them here.

POLO-PLAYING GENERALS

Foremost among those who have warned of the current perilous trend is the Communist Party. Reaction hates and fears it most. Its potential for progress is well known to such men as the governor of Puebla, Maximino Camacho, the President's brother, to Portes Gil—and, last but not least, to the representatives of American imperialism. It is most significant that when the Almazanistas staged their demonstration upon Wallace's arrival, certain individuals within the American Embassy urged the reporters to blame the Communists. This was so obvious an Almazanista stunt that few newspapermen conceded to this suggestion. Thereupon the raid upon the Communist headquarters resulted.

Directly responsible for the plot was a group known as the Polo-Playing Generals, men closely associated with Camacho's brother. Among them are Generals Amaro, Macias, now Minister of War, and the millionaire Abelardo Rodriguez. Their plan was to smash the Party before Avila Camacho took office and to present him with an inaugural gift, the corpse of the only consistent, anti-imperialist, pro-people's party in the land. The plotters worked with inefficient haste. Forty-eight hours before Camacho was to take the tricolored sash from Cardenas, they sped in automobiles to the Communist headquarters at No. 10 Brazil, opened fire on the building. Inside a group of teachers had assembled to discuss means to aid their fellows striking in the state of Mexico. Another group was meeting with a representative of Avila Camacho himself, Alicia San Miguel, of the Liga Femenil, to plan the party's participation in the festivities of the inauguration. The *camarilla* of army men surrounded the offices, and fired from the rooftops of the adjoining buildings. The Communists had been raided in similar fashion by Almazanistas two months before and one of their members had been killed, two wounded. One of them telephoned the police. It was after their arrival that the corpse of an army major was found on the stairway. The reactionary press exulted the next day: they had their story. The generals exulted, believing their plan had succeeded. But they blundered. The following day a stream of prominent men in labor and liberal circles filed through Camacho's offices protesting the provocation. They knew the Communists did not believe in assassination, in acts of individual violence. It was too fantastic for discussion—this charge that the Communists plotted to shoot Camacho and Mr. Wallace in the bargain. And they told the new president their mind. He promptly liberated fifty-three of the fifty-six and after an investigation, freed the last three. The official inquiry indicates that the army man killed was shot in the back by his own men.

The plotters, however, haven't finished. They will repeat the game, and if they get away with their terrorism against Communists, the CTM is next in line, and finally all that remains progressive of the PRM. This is axiomatic by this time.

Mexico's perspectives? I will discuss them in my article on the Laguna next week. When I think of Mexico's future I cannot forget the little school I visited in the bleak yet rich lands of Coahuila where the children sang a song called "The Romance of the Oil Expropriation," and where they read from a textbook which began with the following words: "My name is Pablo and the community in which I live is called El Futuro." The book ended with these sentences: "The future will be with our people. Our grandparents were right in calling this place El Futuro." The families whose children sing "The Romance of the Oil Expropriation" have yet to be heard from.

JOSEPH NORTH.

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Mr. Hillman Baits the Trap

How "labor's representative" on the Defense Commission works to prevent strikes and "train" youth for forced labor in the military set-up. A firsthand report by Adam Lapin.

Washington.

CONSCRIPTION is bad enough, but it will be recalled that the President was thinking last June of a forced labor program that was even closer to fascism than the Burke-Wadsworth act. The President was for drafting all young men and women when they reached a certain age—not just the young men whose numbers were pulled out of the goldfish bowl first. Some of the youngsters were to be trained in military camps, others in work camps, and still others directly in industry. They were all to be imbued with patriotism and purged of subversive thoughts. One of the chief reasons that this scheme never materialized was that the reactionaries on the Hill distrusted Aubrey Williams, Mrs. Roosevelt, Attorney General Jackson, and the other New Deal thinkers who worked out this design for fascism. Above all, they were uneasy because Sidney Hillman was to be the chief of this grandiose set-up. One prominent Pennsylvania congressman, who was active in the campaign to pass the Burke-Wadsworth act, put it succinctly when he said: "I wouldn't let my daughter be trained by that Jew bastard." The tories on Capitol Hill preferred to have the army officers take direct charge of the regimentation of American life.

It is one of the outstanding ironies of Washington politics that the hard-boiled reactionaries in Congress still don't appreciate the role of Sidney Hillman as head of the Defense Commission's Labor Division. For example, there was that unhappy encounter between the poll-tax statesman, Howard Smith, and the labor statesman, Sidney Hillman. The labor statesman swore before the Smith committee he had never done a single thing to withhold government contracts from firms which violate the Wagner act. And yet the sourpussed Virginian eyed him with suspicion. Hillman is Jewish, he was born in Russia, and he is the head of a trade union. That is a pretty fearful combination for the die-hards on Capitol Hill; and belly-crawling has appeased neither their fears nor their prejudices. But despite the obstacles created by Congressional ingratitude, Hillman has done his best. He has tried as hard as any Gene Cox or Clare Hoffman to prevent strikes in arms plants. He has undertaken the most difficult job in the Defense Commission—the job of getting labor to submit in a spirit of sacrifice beneath the golden heel of a wildly profiteering war economy.

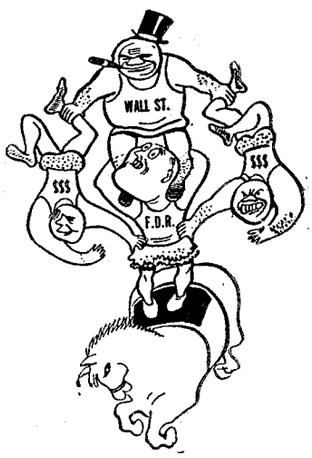
Hillman's Labor Division has two broad functions. It supplies skilled workers for the various needs of war industry. And it attempts to stop strikes by persuading labor to compromise demands for wage increases and collective bargaining in the interests of so-called national unity. Naturally the no-strike activities of the Division have received the lion's share of attention. But the labor supply work is equally important, and has begun to worry progressive labor leaders increasingly.

Many Defense Commission officials admit that they don't understand the first thing about the elaborate training set-up in Hillman's division. Releases about new programs flow almost daily from the fertile pen of Herbert Harris, erstwhile authority on labor affairs for the liberal weeklies, who is now Hillman's press man. The first function of the division is to train new workers, young people, apprentices, unemployed workers, for the needs of the war industries. The second task is to train the skills of workers who already have jobs in industry. Hillman has not created new agencies to do all this, but is coordinating about 12 existing youth and labor agencies.

WORKSHOP TRAINING

The new youth training program is not as extreme as the original forced labor scheme, but it aims at the same objective of harnessing the young people of America to the war machine. Youth agencies which were starved for funds when they were engaged in the peaceful pursuits of providing relief and education are now flush. The United States Office of Education has received two grants of $60,500,000 and $15,000,000 to train workers for jobs in arms plants. Dr. John W. Studebaker, Commissioner of the Office of Education, admitted in testimony before the Senate Appropriations Committee the extent to which his agency has been subordinated to the arms program. He said that "We are operating an educational agency in terms of the needs of national defense." The National Youth Administration has received an appropriation of $32,500,000 to supplement its regular funds.

Following a bitter jurisdictional dispute which has by no means ended, the functions of the NYA and the Office of Education were divided in a formal peace treaty. The Office of Education has a monopoly on vocational training for young workers, for older unemployed workers, and for workers with jobs in industry. It is providing gratis a valuable service for many corporations by training workers who are then hired at beginners' wages. Where there is a direct tie between the vocational training set-up and a munitions factory, as in the case of the Wright aircraft plant in Paterson, N. J., young people in training are subjected to the same restrictions which prevail in the employment office of the corporation. This, of course, has led to discrimination against Negroes and at times against other minorities as well. NYA has been confined in its pact with the Office of Education to providing "experience" rather than training. This experience is obtained in workshops for young people which are becoming the most important activity of NYA. These NYA workshops go in for actual production and have in a few instances been making simple articles for the Army and the Navy—at regular NYA wages of $14 to $18 per month for forty-five to seventy hours' work.



ADMINISTRATION SOLICITUDE

These training programs are dumping a large number of skilled and semi-skilled workers on an already over-crowded labor market. In a recent survey, the United States Employment Service registered 5,700,000 unemployed workers who were available for jobs. Of these, 900,000 were skilled, and 1,100,000 semi-skilled. Now the Office of Education is planning to train 750,000 workers per year through vocational schools; a substantial number of these workers will augment the army of job seekers. NYA has about 70,000 young people in 3,636 workshops and a total of 230,000 young people in all out-of-school projects. These youngsters, too, are being equipped with skills applicable in the arms industry. The CIO has complained that these workers are being trained without any consideration of the chances of placing them, the effect on wage standards, or what will happen to them after the arms boom collapses. John L. Lewis declared in his report to the Atlantic City convention of the CIO that "there appears to have been made no satisfactory determination of the actual need for trained workers and the programs are still being expanded without a proper relationship to requirements."

Big business has resisted large-scale plant expansion for arms on the ground that it fears idle plants when the war boom inevitably ends. The administration has been extremely solicitous about this problem. In many cases it has given new plants to corporations

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outright. In all cases it has provided a generous amortization plan. Similar solicitude has not been shown for the future of the human beings who are being trained at top speed for temporary jobs in the munitions industries.

The dangers of the Hillman training program are accentuated by the fact that the entire set-up is controlled by corporation executives and efficiency experts. Owen D. Young of General Electric was instrumental in getting the program started. He met with employer and union representatives and outlined for them a training-in-industry program. As coordinator of the government's various training agencies, Hillman appointed Floyd W. Reeves, who was director of the American Youth Commission of which Young is chairman. Young is less publicly associated with the training program than at first, but he is still very much of a power behind the scenes.

Hillman apparently gets quite a thrill out of rubbing elbows with the tycoons of industry. In his speech to the convention of the United Automobile Workers, he referred ostentatiously to Owen D. Young as "my aide." These corporation aides of Hillman have quietly moved in and taken things over. Channing R. Dooley, manager of industrial relations of Socony Vacuum Oil Co., is director of the program for training workers within industry. Dooley's assistant is J. W. Dietz, personel relations manager of Western Electric. Dooley and Dietz in turn brought in a corps of efficiency experts and labor relations directors from Westinghouse Electric and United States Steel.

COMPANY UNION BACKGROUNDS

Dooley outlined his job with admirable frankness before the Senate Appropriations Committee: "We are now here with Mr. Hillman to help set up a service to industry to help train these people when they come into industry." And that is just what he has tried to do. Servicing industry is his job. He and his associates have helped establish apprenticeship plans for corporations and have instructed industry in the ways of making the fullest use of the training facilities of the government's various training agencies. Dooley has also devised a program for training foremen, supervisors, and junior executives. The full implications of this entire set-up are illuminated by the background of Dooley and Dietz in private industry. *They were both sponsors of carefully supervised company unions of long standing.*

Control by efficiency experts is being extended to each of the twenty regional offices now being organized by Hillman to supply labor to local industries. A personnel director will be in charge of each office, and he will be assisted by a panel of ten other corporation experts. Labor is magnanimously given two members on an advisory committee in each region together with two representatives of management—which is already well represented by 11 personnel directors and efficiency experts. There is an ugly rumor going around that a conciliator will be attached to each of these corporation-dominated regional offices. Hillman has denied this report, but it is still current in the Defense Commission offices. In any event, Hillman is counting on a regional set-up of reliable AFL and CIO advisers (chosen from among his own friends in the CIO) who can be counted on to discourage strikes in cooperation with the Labor Department conciliation service.

Hillman's function in the general field of labor relations is to restrain the trade unions while industry, including William S. Knudsen and its other representatives on the Defense Commission, drives boldly and vigorously for elimination of the five-day week and restrictions on the right to strike. He was invaluable during the entire period when contracts were handed out to Bethlehem Steel and other notorious Wagner act violators. He continued to bubble over with promises to the unions that he was taking care of the situation. He stalled and stalled until most of the contracts were signed, sealed, and delivered. Now he is putting out inspired dope stories about his gallant battle against the latest $2,000,000 contract for Ford. He never uttered a peep against the $122,000,000 contract given to Ford immediately after the election. But it so happens that the War Department itself is torn with controversy over whether the contract for light trucks should have gone to Ford or to the Bantam company. And Hillman has safely aligned himself with the top-flight army men against the pro-Ford group in the War Department and the Defense Commission. Even so, he has not yet ventured a public statement on the matter.

To some extent Hillman has used industrial executives to help cope with strikes and labor difficulties. E. D. Bransome of the Vanadium Corp. of America has played an important role in his capacity as consultant in the Labor Division. But Hillman has devoted himself primarily to building up a corps of labor leaders to keep unions and strikes in check. He has not hesitated to adorn his various advisory committees with old-line AFL die-hards like John P. Coyne of the AFL Building Trades Department, or John P. Frey of the Metal Trades Federation. Frey was recently appointed by Hillman a member of his Shipbuilding Stabilization Committee. He is also developing a group of labor leaders who are either associated with the newer unions or who will have more prestige with labor than most of the AFL wheel horses.

Walter Reuther, Socialist spokesman in the United Automobile Workers, Clinton Golden of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee, Thomas Burns and Sherman Dalrymple of the United Rubber Workers, and Van A. Bittner of the United Mine Workers seem to fit into this latter category. Golden and Reuther are on Hillman's Training Within Industry Advisory Committee. Burns has been used recently to persuade strikers to go back to work. A corps of labor leaders of this type will be of immense importance to management as workers in the mass production industries ask for wage increases and better conditions to offset uncontrolled war profiteering.

At the same time Hillman has attempted to undermine those unions which he knows he cannot dominate. He helped persuade the National Labor Relations Board to review the certification of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union headed by Harry Bridges as the bargaining unit on the entire West Coast. Hillman pressured the Labor Board at the direct personal request of Joe Ryan, president of the machine-controlled AFL International Longshoremen's Association. This was an obvious move to strengthen the ILA as against the CIO union.

ANTI-LABOR LEGISLATION

During the current campaign of employers and reactionaries in Congress for legislation to outlaw strikes, Hillman has been uniformly cheerful and optimistic. He has consistently minimized the danger of repressive laws, and taken the position that his Labor Division has the problem well in hand. Hillman's method of handling the situation has been to try to jockey labor into agreeing "voluntarily" to give up the right to strike which Howard Smith and Gene Cox are trying to take away by coercion. For example, Hillman's Labor Policy Committee of 16 hand-picked CIO, AFL and Railroad Brotherhood leaders ventured to promise that the entire labor movement "pledges to take no action which may in any way impede production before all conciliation facilities of the Federal government for resolving any existing controversies have been exhausted." This pledge was in direct contradiction to the spirit of the CIO convention's resolution refusing to surrender the right to strike. In the rather unlikely event that Hillman should succeed in having this pledge carried out on a substantial scale, it would have practically the same effect as compulsory mediation.

Hillman maintains that his no-strike pledge has minimized the danger of anti-labor legislation. Actually these appeasement tactics only encourage further attacks on labor. Aided by Attorney General Jackson's blast against the Vultee strikers, the press and tories in Congress have been whipping up a veritable hysteria against strikes in arms plants. Hillman and his stooges admit by implication that labor is wrong when it goes on strike in defense of its rights, and they promise that labor will sin no more.

The only way to stop this onslaught and win public support for labor is to launch a bold counter-attack against the war profiteers, on the Defense Commission and off it, who are making a racket out of national defense. That would reveal who are behind the crusade against labor's rights and why. John L. Lewis began to do this job some time before the elections; it is hoped he will continue it in his capacity as co-chairman of Labor's Non-Partisan League and president of the United Mine Workers. Another vehicle for counter-attack with great potentialities is the Wheeler investigation of the profits and foreign connections of the arms industry which will probably get going early in the next session of Congress.

ADAM LAPIN.

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The CIO on the Pacific

West Coast workingmen are flocking to the union halls. It happened after Vultee. "Give us six bits before our families die." How Hillman broke a union.

Los Angeles.

"SEND someone over to the side gate," says a voice over the phone to "Slim" Connelly, local CIO secretary. "Tell him to carry a newspaper under his arm so's we can recognize him. We'll have the whole department out when he comes!"

The voice is from a parts plant and is just one of many which are appealing for aid these days in the new organizational drive sweeping Southern California. The Vultee strike did it, of course. Like wildfire the idea is catching on. The new CIO headquarters in Los Angeles, among the finest in the country, buzz with activity. Seven meeting halls in the three-story building with its restaurant and bar are almost always crowded. Four more full-time organizers were put on the payroll by the Central Council recently, making a dozen in various unions within a single month.

The wave rides high. In the recent period trade union victories have been won in Consolidated Steel, Swift & Co., Goodyear, McKesson Drug, Sinclair Oil; in the lumber, chemical, dried fruit and nut industries in the north; in the construction, sportswear, laundry, dry cleaning, hosiery, and furniture industries in the south.

Before I tell you about Vultee, let me record the next most important conquest—from the CIO point of view. A new coastwise contract was won a short while ago by 15,000 longshoremen. The new two-year pact raises pay from 95 cents to $1 per hour and $1.40 to $1.50 for overtime. It embodies the seven basic demands of the union for a hiring hall, the six-hour day, load and penalty agreements, safety code, the right of the union to discipline its own members, to observe bona fide picket lines, and preferential hiring. And to overcome the anxiety of those who worried about labor-saving devices, about the prospect of layoffs, a satisfactory arrangement has been made assuring work to all at present wages until 1942.

For sixteen months shipping interests fought against these demands. Their chief threat to split the union was bolstered by the argument that they would not come to terms so long as Harry Bridges was its leader. The longshore pact consequently marks an important retreat for the waterfront employers and an equally important boost for progressive unionism on the Pacific Coast.

But to get back to Vultee and aircraft—the spirit which won that strike still rages through the land. You can still hear the rhymed demands of the Vultee boys:

> Get 'em into the blue!
> Get 'em into the sky!
> But at least give us six bits
> Before our families die!

The workers transformed the company's aspiring motto and the words went winging their way through the entire vast aircraft industry even before the strikers had wrung their victory from the combined cabal of employers, War Department representatives (one of whom fortunately drank himself out of the situation), Labor Department conciliators, and the intellectual musclemen of Defense Commissioner Sidney Hillman. The stirring of the aircraft workers turned into a veritable ground swell, spilled into other industries, invigorating the CIO movement and bidding fair to bring back the memorable days of '36 and '37, when organization was in the air. This was made possible because the Vultee strike victory shattered the illusion that the inevitable lot of the workers in "national defense" industry is to be silence, obedience, and—if need be—a sub-standard wage.

The Vultee strike was of nationwide significance. For the walkout was a rebuke to Hillman and a repudiation of his presumptuous pledge that the right to strike would be sacrificed. Hillman had previously been successful along this line, to be sure—particularly in aircraft. Not long ago he succeeded in blackjacking the Boeing workers of Seattle into calling off a projected strike and into accepting an unsatisfactory agreement which later ripped their fine union into shreds.

Because a machinists' local was involved in the Boeing quarrel, Hillman had the cooperation of the AFL bureaucracy. But the Vultee workers were under CIO leadership—which would not buckle under Hillman's coercion, as he had reason to know. Nevertheless, through the influence of the Detroit headquarters of the United Automobile Workers—CIO, where the labor defense commissioner has considerable influence, he forbade the calling of the strike and ordered arbitration in the event of a disagreement. The company eagerly seized this offer; the union said nothing doing. And thereafter the company never failed to stress the point that "it was willing to be reasonable." But Lew Michener, UAW's Pacific Coast director, replied: "Fifty cents an hour is not a fit subject for arbitration."

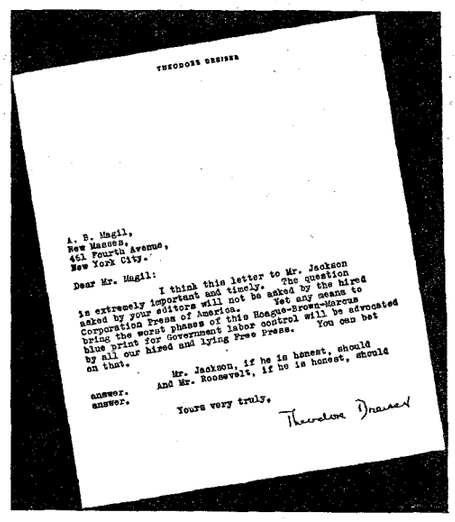
For seven weeks the deadlock lasted. The union bargaining committee spent an eighth week seeking to budge the company from its irreconcilable attitude on the wage question. They failed. They had more than fulfilled their obligation to negotiate; they then appealed to the workers. The strike began.

Hillman replied to this with an official statement. The strike, he said, was "very, very unfortunate." He moved vindictively behind the scenes. His strike-breaking plan was two-pronged: 1. To remove Wyndham Mortimer, veteran auto union organizer and co-leader of the strike with Michener; 2. To call a special meeting of the UAW executive board which would declare the strike unauthorized. He almost succeeded in inducing UAW President R. J. Thomas to adopt this course, mainly through the aid of the "Socialist," Walter Reuther, the UAW's chief jingoist, who was seeking to commit the CIO to a pro-war position at its Atlantic City convention then in session. The plot did not succeed, chiefly because of the counter-efforts of John L. Lewis.

As a result, the CIO movement on the Pacific Coast swung into an excellent position. This was not always so; two years ago assorted stool pigeons, Trotskyites, and friends of David Dubinsky and Homer Martin, former UAW president, succeeded in splitting the organization from top to bottom, finally dragging it to the brink of dissolution.

But the CIO was successful in cleaning house during 1939. Rehabilitation was painful and slow. Not until the beginning of 1940 did things really begin to perk up. The Vultee strike, culmination of the general trend, blew the lid off.

A CIO state conference consisting of an enlarged executive board met over the week-end of December 7 and prepared to launch an all-out organizing campaign. Hundreds of



THEODORE DREISER

A. B. Magil,
New Masses,
461 Fourth Avenue,
New York City.

Dear Mr. Magil:

I think this letter to Mr. Jackson is extremely important and timely. The question asked by your editors of America. Yet any means to Corporation Press of this Knapp-Brown-Harcus bring the worst phases of labor control will be advocated blue print for government labor control. You can bet by all our hired and lying Free Press. on that.

Mr. Jackson, if he is honest, should answer. And Mr. Roosevelt, if he is honest, should answer.

Yours very truly,

Theodore Dreiser

AGAINST FORCED LABOR. *Theodore Dreiser raises his voice against the Roosevelt administration's plans for conscription of labor in wartime which were exposed in an open letter to Attorney General Jackson in the November 26 issue of* NEW MASSES. *The details of these plans were presented "unofficially" in an article in the November "Harvard Law Review" by Francis Hoague, Russell M. Brown, and Philip Marcus, three lawyers of the Department of Justice. In previous issues we have published letters praising our expose from Sen. Gerald P. Nye of North Dakota, Dr. Harry F. Ward, former chairman of the American Civil Liberties Union, and Morris Watson, one of the progressive leaders of the American Labor Party.*

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organizers, international representatives, local leaders, and plain rank and filers journeyed from all parts of the state to attend the San Francisco sessions. A caravan of many autos made the 500-mile trek from Los Angeles. Major emphasis of the meeting was on aircraft. Not only the Vultee victory but the phenomenal growth of the industry in Southern California during the past year made it a natural choice for concentration of effort. Employment figures in aircraft have soared beyond the 100,000 mark; the backlog of orders exceeds $1,000,000,000. The government's amortization scheme absorbs expansion costs, while a 12 percent profit has been assured ever since that day last summer when the aircraft manufacturers unashamedly let it be known that they would "not be so willing to help the army and navy unless the Treasury Department adopts a more sympathetic attitude." Whenever the Vultee bosses began making fake patriotic appeals, the strikers none too gently reminded them of this statement.

Profits or no, the aircraft manufacturers want the open shop. They are thinking of the future, of the nuisance of having to meet with grievance committees, of the difficulty of keeping the workers from demanding improved conditions. To make organization difficult, they concocted a wonderful plan—they'd escape the union plague by employing none but air-dazzled kids who would be willing to *pay* for the privilege of tinkering with a real airplane. Rosy-cheeked kids at that, real Americans, untouched by the taint of unionism.

Well, it's true that some 90 percent of the Vultee workers joined their first union when they signed UAW cards. But how quickly they learned. Kids? Yes. American kids? Yes. And with definite notions of what they wanted, willing to go to bat for their rights. Which they did!

Today a nightmare haunts the troubled sleep of other aircraft manufacturers as the union turns its organizing batteries upon their plants. At North American, subsidiary of General Motors, spontaneous sit-downs have already taken place without benefit of publicity. Forced wage raises have occurred; departments have signed en masse with the UAW. Even more impressive was the opening of the drive two weeks ago at Douglas, the Ford of the aircraft industry. This is the open-shop Gibraltar of the West, stronghold of Los Angeles *Times'* Harry Chandler, one of the diehards of the Merchants and Manufacturers Association. The eagerness of the union to tussle with the Douglas colossus speaks volumes for its vitality and self-confidence. Several organizers are now working in an office near the plant. The union paper is distributed despite warning of violence and arrests. On the occasion of the first distribution, the company massed its full array of police. "Stinky" Davis, chief of the Douglas special police, watched the proceedings wrathfully. "That's how the Reds took over France," he shouted.

To which Wyndham Mortimer replied: "I thought the fascists took over France!"

Davis is that former Los Angeles police chief who used to travel up and down the land with a special exhibition of Red-baiting material, instructing employers how to smash unions. He was fired in a Los Angeles clean-up campaign, and his presence at Douglas was inescapably symbolic of the hopeful trend in the city's affairs. The mighty have come down from City Hall to Santa Monica. During the past year the citizens have ousted a racketeering, employer-controlled mayor, abolished the notorious "Red Squad," and in the November elections sent sailing an arch-labor-baiting district attorney. Candidates supported by labor have in each case been elected. Another victory was won last month when the State Supreme Court upheld the right of sympathetic picketing and the legality of the closed shop. The power and prestige of the labor movement is higher than ever, and rising.

The other day, the winning combination of Michener and Mortimer led a large group of CIO men from many unions to the Douglas plant. The beautiful white sound truck of the auto union blared out the message of organization, ignoring Santa Monica's anti-noise ordinance, passed by the sycophantic City Council to prevent just such a demonstration. As they entered the plant that lunch hour, the CIO boys offered the Douglas workers the union paper. The workers went through a pantomime with their eyes, looking toward their lunch boxes or toward a coat pocket where the paper might be inserted. Others quitting the plant accepted the paper, folded it carefully, stuck it into a pocket. The demonstration was attended with much publicity. Reporters, photographers, curbstone radio quizzers were there.

"How long was it between the time you started organizing Vultee and the time you struck?" asked a questioner of Wyndham Mortimer.

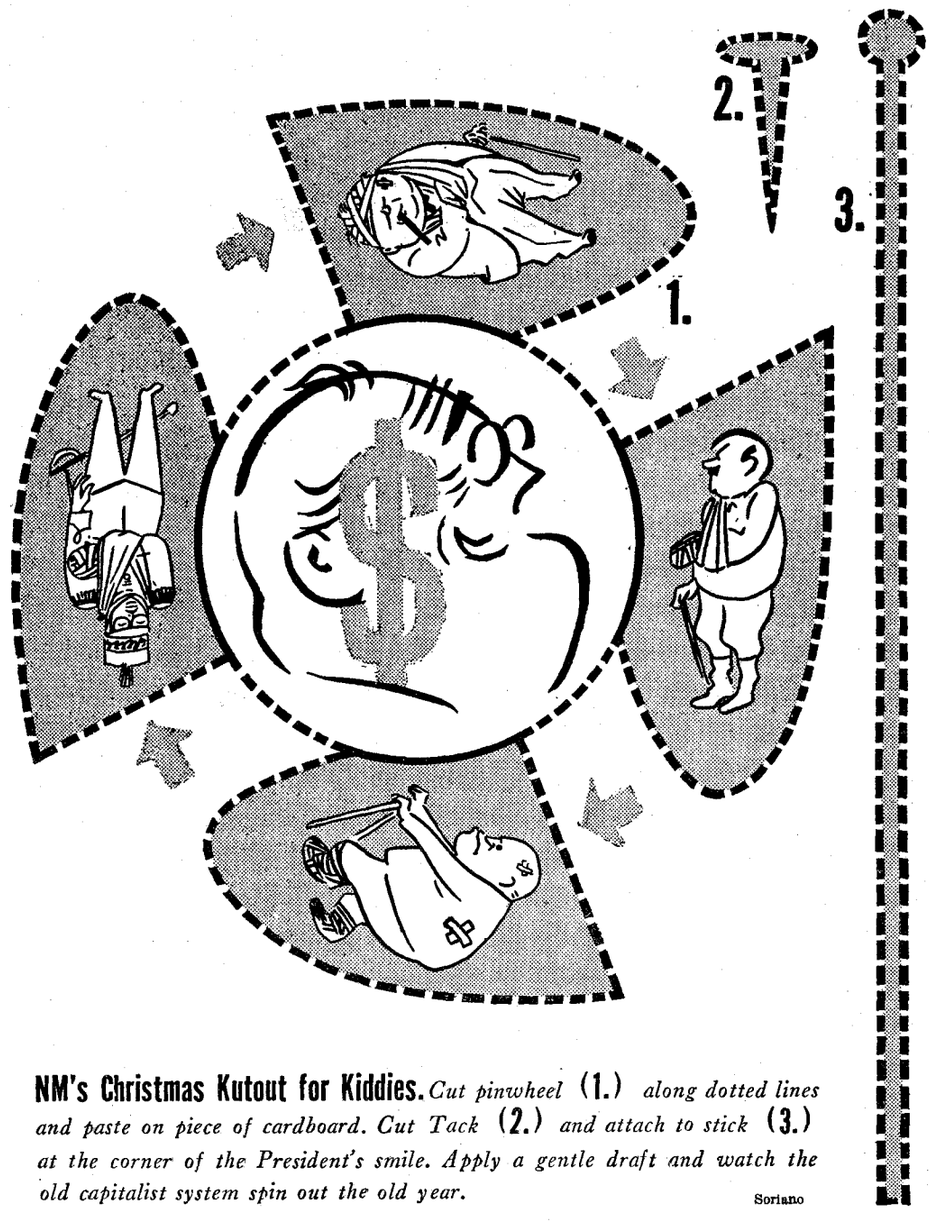
"About six months," he replied.

"How long will it be before you pull Douglas?"

"Who said we're going to pull Douglas?" he replied. "All we want is to eliminate the 50-cent an hour wage and other un-American conditions—by peaceful means, we hope. The question of whether a strike will occur here rests entirely with one man."

"Who's that?"

"Donald Douglas." FRANK H. LEWIS.



NM's Christmas Kutout for Kiddies. *Cut pinwheel* (1.) *along dotted lines and paste on piece of cardboard. Cut Tack* (2.) *and attach to stick* (3.) *at the corner of the President's smile. Apply a gentle draft and watch the old capitalist system spin out the old year.* Soriano

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Star Chambers for Teachers?

Dr. Harry F. Ward sees the drive on the teachers as part of a national offensive against democracy and educational freedom.

THE attack on the New York Teachers Unions is a major move in the national offensive of reaction against democratic rights and educational freedom. It seeks to put out of action the strongest teachers unions in the country—6,000 public school teachers and 1,000 college and university teachers—in order that state appropriations for education may be cut, and restrictions placed upon free higher education. It is a vital part of the total assault upon organized labor under the screen of national defense. The more intelligent reactionaries know well their need to prevent the fusing of progressive intellectuals with progressive labor in a common front. They know also the relation of free education to democratic development.

In this New York engagement, the new weapon of reaction—the legislative committee—is being used with effectiveness. The methods of the Dies committee are improved upon at some points, with the same flagrant disregard of constitutional rights and democratic principles. The legislature appointed a committee to "investigate, study and review state aid, administration, conduct, methods, subject matter, and subversive activity in the public schools . . . and every other matter deemed relevant." The main committee held two sessions on "state aid" behind closed doors, without witnesses or educators. Chairman Rapp, legislative spokesman for those organized taxpayers who oppose educational expenditures, thereupon announced that he would introduce measures at Albany in January calling for a cut of twelve millions in state aid to education.

COUDERT'S ONE-MAN COMMITTEE

For several months a sub-committee of one also held closed hearings on the remainder of the subject matter of the inquiry. This committee is Senator Coudert, a suave, wealthy lawyer, from a silk-stocking section of New York City, who lost 10,000 of his Republican votes in the last election. The committee's counsel is quoted in the press as saying that they did not know where to begin, but everybody they consulted advised them to concentrate on subversive activities; also he stated that the inquiry would be limited to members of the union. The union's president was ordered to produce the membership lists. For refusal he stands convicted of contempt and ordered to prison by two courts; the appeal is now before the highest tribunal in the state. Other members of the union were cited, but when they were refused counsel and a transcript of their testimony (because that would "destroy the secrecy of the investigation"), on advice of counsel they refused to appear at this one-man star chamber hearing, stating their willingness to testify when their legal rights were granted. Proceedings for contempt have been ordered against them, twenty-two in number.

The City Council unanimously voted full support of the "investigation," one of the two Socialist members adding that he hoped it would be conducted with fairness.

Also the Board of Higher Education, which supervises New York City's four municipal colleges, has received an opinion from the corporation counsel of the city declaring it has authority to dismiss any of the teachers who refused to testify.

The one open hearing that the Rapp-Coudert committee has held was adjourned after three days of a show that stole the headlines away from Dies, and was worth about half a page twice to the New York *Times*. Also it went Dies one better in anti-democratic procedure in denying persons accused by witnesses the right to answer.

There appeared, of course, the usual exhibitionist, expelled Communists, whose charges were declared untrue by everyone they mentioned. Concerning the professors assailed, the official undergraduate paper of Brooklyn College says the list includes some of the "most universally popular and scholastically eminent teachers in the college."

TESTIMONY OF PRESIDENT

An addition to the propaganda routine was the testimony of the president of Brooklyn College, who has had the reputation of a liberal, and still claims to be one. He was sure that student pickets were led by Communists because "the leadership was the sort of person one sees in the pictures of people who attend Madison Square Garden meetings." He described the provisions that protect the tenure of his professors as a "clumsy procedure," and objected to the democratic set-up of the city colleges which gives the teaching staff a share in the administration. Asked whether proof of membership in the Communist Party should be cause for dismissal, his answer was "If I were acting on my own I think a few startling headlines might appear."

The forces behind this New York episode typify those which have appeared, and will appear, in similar situations elsewhere. The interests of business are served by the New York State Economic Council which started the attack on social science text books and in every issue of its bulletin inveighs against the "high salaries and low standards of teachers." It is joined by the Chamber of Commerce of the State of New York, whose Special Committee on Education reported that ". . . all but defectives must be taught to read, write, and figure reasonably well . . . and beyond that point it is a fair question whether the state should bear all of the expenses or whether parents who are amply able to educate their own youngsters should pay for it." Then comes the Taxpayers Federation whose recent convention is informed that attempts at economy in public education have been "frustrated by the Teachers Union." The line-up is completed by the American Educational Association which calls upon the committee to recommend the abolition of such "subversive" burdens on the taxpayers as the "Soviet activity program" and the free municipal colleges.

NATIONAL ISSUES

These forces, seeking to limit education in the interests of profit, are assisted by the ignorant patriotism of the American Legion, which they control and mislead, and by the equally ignorant opposition to higher education of the backward section of the rural population. They are joined by the right wing of the Roman Church, which in the interests of its own controlled education fights ceaselessly against the American democratic educational system, at present in a strange alliance with the Coughlin followers and the large section of the hierarchy which criticizes him. The educational program of right-wing Catholics is identical with that proposed by the Rapp-Coudert committee. Coudert himself is a Catholic, joint author of the free-time religious education bill, which broke through our traditional separation of public education and organized religion, and his firm is reported to handle large interests of the church. The *Tablet,* Coughlinite Catholic journal of Brooklyn, hails the work of the committee with glee and prides itself on having largely inspired its inquisition.

The issues raised by this New York committee on the schools are those raised by the Dies committee and they have to be settled on a national scale. Can persons of unpopular political opinions be denied jobs? Can the American people be driven by the Red scare to surrender their basic rights to freedom of the mind and to organize themselves in ways of their own choosing? Is the legislative arm of government above the Constitution? Can it bring back the Star Chamber and the Inquisition? Can it invade the secrecy of the ballot by probing into the political beliefs and opinions of citizens? Can it put into prison union officers who are in duty bound to defend their members against discharge and blacklist by refusing to give up their lists? A California court has said No. But the issue has to go to the Supreme Court before the American people can know what more they have to do to protect their right to work.

The Teachers Union of New York is making a gallant and intelligent fight for basic rights of all Americans, for freedom to organize and freedom in education. It needs, and deserves, the support of the whole of organized labor, whose demand and effort produced our public school system; of all parents who have children for whom they want a free, efficient educational system; of all who understand that without freedom of the mind no other freedoms can live.

HARRY F. WARD.

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Strictly Personal

by RUTH McKENNEY

The Winners

I FEEL like beginning this column with a loud whoopla! I'm sitting before a pile of many more than a hundred letters, you see, written for the ten-books-that-changed-your-life contest. And although I honestly didn't start this affair to prove anything in particular, I feel absolutely triumphant at the moment. For if these letters are indicative of what the American people read, and I think they are, they prove my theory that the best in literature is none too good for workers and their middle-class friends.

I guess I should explain (in case everybody hasn't been around to hear a group of writers hash over their occupation), that there is an immense school of thought, current, I am sorry to say, not only among the stinkers who run the newspapers and the cheap magazines, but also among plenty of well-meaning people, that the American proletariat reads, and wants to read, nothing but the most dismal trash. Of course the good-intentioned who hold this unattractive theory feel, unlike Mr. Hearst and the proprietors of the *Saturday Evening Post,* that some beautiful day the American worker will be educated out of his current frightful taste.

The reason that I know all about this write-down method is that once, in my extreme and unfortunate youth, I am ashamed to say I believed it myself. My beloved rubber workers exploded that nonsense for me, once and for all, and ever since then I've been the loudest and most indignant member of the nothing-is-too-good school. I've battled fiercely against smarty-pants who think they can look down from their middle-class heaven and condescend to the working class; and I've argued myself into a froth against editors who imagine they can lift the *Life-Look-Pic* technique right from Wall Street, the better to spread honest ideas. And after all, I'm an editor of NEW MASSES. For years we've been harassed by fellow intellectuals who don't read the pulps themselves, (naturally) but who think NEW MASSES would amount to a lot more if we made it a pink edition of *Snappy Stories.*

Now we have some good, solid proof to confound our trash-minded critics. For of all the letters in the book contest we received, only two could possibly support the pulp theory. All the rest proved, absolutely, that American people read the very best they can get.

Most of the letters were from workers, or people who had grown up in middle-class homes where money was scarce and security a dream. The letters followed a pattern—first, a child's book that opened horizons. Often, it was *Ivanhoe,* sometimes *The Three Musketeers.* Something like that. Next, in adolescence, or later, depending on the writer's good luck, came a series of books that changed personal standards. Among workers, these books were invariably anti-religious. If the writer was Catholic, the books were exposes of the history of the popes, attacks on miracles, and so on. If the worker was a Protestant, the books were Ingersoll or Robert Blatchford, an English Socialist who wrote about 1910. If the contestant went to college (about half of the entries did, most of these working their way through) the anti-religious books were Anatole France's *Penguin Island* and the famous *South Wind.* But always, in every letter, the entries showed that before a man or woman could go on to clear political thinking, he or she must first rid himself of the rigid philosophies learned in childhood. This part of the letters astonished me. I had no idea that religion or personal behavior standards picked up from early schooling or home, played such a universal role in inhibiting thought. Marx was certainly right.

Next after the anti-religious or anti-Puritan books came a period, among the entries generally, of intense self-education. Our poets on the left will be excited to know that nearly every letter mentioned at least one poet ranging from Shakespeare, Shelley, and Keats, to T. S. Eliot, Sandburg, Ezra Pound. The great novels turned up—the "simple" people who wrote in listed Tolstoy, or Gorky, Thackeray's *Vanity Fair,* or Hardy, Dickens, or Dostoievsky, or Maugham's *Of Human Bondage.* These great names of world literature should be something of a surprise to the pulp-and-pictures boys.

The contest letters generally took a sharp turn, along about the fifth or sixth book listed. Nearly everybody had his own favorite eye-opener, a book that reversed his philosophical and economic thinking and led him into a whole new field of work and reading. Lincoln Steffens' *Autobiography* led the entries in this department. Malraux's *Man's Fate* came second. Upton Sinclair's novels, the most virile and long-lasting in American literature of this century anyway, were listed again and again, especially *The Jungle.* George Seldes' books on the press turned up often.

And after the eye-opener book, the patterns in the letters disappear. The workers almost universally listed Lenin for their seventh or eighth entry, often *Imperialism.* Doctors put down various books on Soviet medicine. Writers turned to the Webbs' great picture of Soviet life, and many of the letters listed one or another Strachey opus on Marxism. I thought it very interesting that not one person mentioned Strachey's recent, dismal little job of writing-down, *Hope in America.*

Nine out of ten of the letters ended with *The History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.* To some, this book was a culmination. To others, it was the weight that tipped the scale. Half a dozen wrote to say that after studying this book, they joined the Communist Party.

This is only an unsatisfactory summary of these fascinating personal documents. Every letter is a whole novel in itself; a story of a human being's struggle in this decaying capitalist society, toward happiness and intellectual freedom. Time and again the entries casually sketch in the background for their ten favorite books—the background is poverty, suffering, humiliation, bitter struggle, slow and painful understanding. The books listed in this contest were read by oil lamps in the hired girl's room, in taxi-cabs by youngsters fighting their way through college, in box-cars, on bread-lines, in little frame workers' houses in the Middle West, in tenement rooms in the Bronx. The pile of letters in the NEW MASSES office is the personal record of some hundred-odd brave, great people, people with enormous courage, with brains, with integrity to face anything. These letters were written by the American people, and they make me feel very humble.

And maybe that's the reason I had such a terrible time picking the "winners" of this contest. As a matter of fact, the people who wrote these letters are all winners, but unfortunately I didn't have enough five-dollar bills or books to go around among all the entries. So I picked the letter of the hired girl who is a people's scientist now, for first prize; the entry of a man who started out in the middle class and then became a worker, second; a girl who went to college, third; and the factory worker who started on the job when he was thirteen. The winners come from Colorado, California, New York City, and Ohio, just to show NEW MASSES gets read all over the country! The winning letters are printed in Readers' Forum on pages 21 and 22.

And thus endeth the great historic big cash prize contest, except that I shall never be able to tell all of you who wrote in, every one of you, how much your letters encouraged and strengthened the purpose of all of the editors of NEW MASSES. As long as we have readers like you, NEW MASSES is invincible! And although we knew it before, it is a fine thing to be reassured that nothing, not even our very best efforts, is half good enough for you, the vanguard of the American people.

Merry Christmas! And please keep on writing us letters, even if there isn't a contest!

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One Thousand Cliche Experts

The National Association of Manufacturers held their annual "free enterprise" meeting at the Waldorf-Astoria. Barbara Giles reports on the "rule and ruin" boys and their fancy phrases.

FOR three days straight I have been hearing about free enterprise. To know about free enterprise you should sit in a press box in the Waldorf-Astoria ballroom, looking down at 1,000 gently gleaming pates of the National Association of Manufacturers, and listen to speeches without end, without intermission. It's as though all the addresses had been written on a typewriter with a key marked "free enterprise" that struck automatically at regular, close intervals. Another key, equally useful, is labeled "national defense." The two phrases, taken together, formed the keynote of America's forty-fifth "Congress of Industry."

Elegant exhibits just outside the ballroom illustrated the point. Back of some tables strewn with guns, cartridges, trench shells, airplane parts, and other military odds and ends, stood a large chart showing how $9,724,445,000 in government orders had been apportioned for the manufacture of these pretty playthings. Another exhibit lists without comment twenty-two NAM proposals made to Congress on the current "emergency" tax act and, alongside them, a list of the measure's actual provisions; the differences between the two lists are minor. With uncharacteristic modesty the NAM did not display the anti-labor measures which it got through Congress (with William Green's help), the Smith amendments to the Wagner act. That would not have completed the legislative exhibit but it would have helped.

Free-enterprise-and-national-defense means, according to 1,000 cliche experts, "hands off Knudsen." It means no strikes, no overtime pay, no wage increases, and no organized labor unless it minds what it's told. It means hog profits for the top men, death and taxes for the people. It means rule *and* ruin.

"GIVE US OUR GRAVY"

Not that the experts say these things. By no means—they say "free enterprise" and "the system under which this country has prospered." They "can trust to labor's patriotism" and, if they can't, "public opinion will whip the recalcitrant side into line." It's unbelievable how many suave sentences, how much earnest droning and elocution-school motion it takes to disguise avidity. In a far-off room mimeograph machines thundered, pouring out "full texts" of the star-spangled statements—hundreds of pages to say, "Give us our gravy," a thousand words to express an unspoken slogan, "Jail the progressives." Now and then the line got a little confused, but nobody seemed to notice. They liked it just as well when H. W. Prentis, Jr., retiring president, complained that our schools were stressing physical comforts instead of how-to-live, as when Mrs. Anne O'Hare McCormick, New York *Times* correspondent, said that all the Soviets needed to turn them back to "democracy" were more orange juice, kitchenettes, and Ford cars. Apparently it didn't upset anybody after all the talk about America being the citadel of freedom, prosperity, and happiness, for E. A. Tamm, assistant director of the FBI, to announce that "while we are sitting here a serious crime is being committed somewhere every twenty-one minutes"; or for Carl Snyder, author of *Capitalism the Creator* (the Book that Changed Wendell Willkie's Mind), to declare that America had been moving rapidly toward totalitarianism for the past seven years. Some speakers thought that too much individual liberty had ruined France, others thought it was too much social planning; the audience didn't seem to know the difference.

Aside from such small deviations, the harmony was absolute and airless. For "opposition" there was Col. Philip B. Fleming, administrator of the hated Wage-Hour Act, who sternly told the boys that the law was not to be relaxed; but that no one was complaining about it anyway except a few "professors and columnists." The manufacturers, according to Colonel Fleming, are well pleased with the law as it's being administered now—and no wonder. John R. Steelman, director of the US Conciliation Service, said "lockout" right out loud but he doesn't like strikes either and is all for conciliation as against compulsory arbitration, which latter the manufacturers abhor as possibly depriving them of the liberty to lockout. Mr. Tamm, pinch-hitting for J. Edgar Hoover, who had dashed to Miami Beach to investigate "sabotage," gave his listeners a fine case of meemies by his talk of "foreign agents" in their plants, but reassured them with pledges of full protection from the FBI.

Last to represent the administration was Knudsen himself, who brought word that the government's war orders had been more than 85 percent placed but urged the boys to copy the machine tool industry which "has set a very good example of speeding up." "Isn't it possible," he asked, "to put the defense job on a war basis [conscript labor] even if we are at peace?" The feeling was general that Mr. Knudsen isn't getting his due from the administration: he hasn't enough authority. What these men would prefer—and Gen. Hugh Johnson expressed it for them—is a complete replica of the 1918 War Industries Board. They also want every remnant of that mean old New Deal swept out of sight and at once. Some of them are still pretty petulant about That Man, not so much for what he's doing now as for what he once did. There are those awful Walsh-Healey and Wagner acts; and the money spent for "social reform" (*think* of the guns it could buy); and all the labor organization which we still have with us. Of course, things are happier now. The President has replaced J. Warren Madden on the NLRB with Dr. Harry A. Millis, "a man far more objective and judicial in his viewpoint," to quote Philip D. Reed, chairman of General Electric. And "there is increasing evidence of better understanding and of a closer working relationship between government and business." Administration of the Walsh-Healey act is "better understood" in government circles, according to Wesley M. Angle, president of the Stromberg-Carlson Telephone Co. Mr. Angle also feels that the administration, since the election, is in a "position to alter the administration of the new labor laws radically . . ."

LABOR AND PEACE

But they can't wait; they want labor and all progressives cracked down on *now*. Mixed with their arrogance is more than a hint of alarm. Why else this fanatical purging expedition into the schools, the hiring of Professor Robey of Columbia to abstract 800 textbooks for evidence of "subversive" material? Why this feverish "contacting" of school teachers, the shipping of [illegible] NAM booklets on the beauties of [illegible] terprise into America's schools in [illegible] (and Mr. Prentis has the nerve to [illegible] ter because 2,000,000 copies of the *Communist Manifesto* were sold in the past six [illegible] Finally, why all the pointing-with-alarm and shaking-in-boots over what's left of laws to protect people from just such pirates as those assembled in the Waldorf-Astoria? Because Mr. Prentis has told them that the average American is so confused politically and economically, and so lacking in religious conviction, that he is accepting radical doctrines. Because they know themselves that the capitalist world is in pretty terrible shape. And they've found out that not only is labor organized in this country but progressive peace sentiment is building its organization—and they don't like having to think about it.

They're not altogether happy about the war, either. Mr. Prentis would like the defense objectives "defined." How far abroad are we expected to go and what do we get out of it? And might some form of "state

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socialism" result—such as Dorothy Thompson, the old radical, has been hinting at with her talk about economic planning after the war? Besides, who's going to pay for this war? Certainly not *us:* "we" think it should be paid for year by year, out of "the savings of the people" (baby bonds, "war saving stamps," and taxation). But will the people do it? Aye, there's the rub.

These are serious worries for men already loaded with "the responsibility of industrial preparedness." Yet they seemed to enjoy themselves, in a sober, well-bred fashion. Most of them listened with real attentiveness to the speeches, relishing the familiar smooth phrases and harsh underthrusts. They guffawed when General Johnson told a dirtyish cute story, and laughed a number of times, indulgently, when the ladies came on the stage for a panel discussion of "Women's Responsibilities in Preparing America's Future." The ladies—Emily Post, Lily Pons, Margaret Culkin Banning, and a "typical American housewife"—cross-examined three NAM leaders on national defense problems, and anybody would have laughed. It was worth half the boredom of the convention to hear Emily Post asking, in tones so refined you could hardly hear her, about the correct etiquette of preventing economic dislocations, and Lily Pons cuddling up with "But thees ees so eenteresting! Pleass explain a leetle more." Mrs. Banning and Typical Housewife had to do most of the hard work, drawing from the men the information that women's role in defense was to buy carefully, not wasting but keeping up a "normal demand," to reduce taxes in their communities, and keep an eye on their children's teachers and textbooks. Typical American Housewife was Mrs. Irvin Bussing of Brooklyn. After the discussion I asked her how she had been selected, and she said, oh, by two or three of her friends who knew that she was unemployed. The "unemployed" surprised me—she wasn't dressed that way at all. Was her husband unemployed too? I asked. Mrs. Bussing was amused no end: "Oh, my dear, I didn't mean I was in *want!* I simply had nothing to do." Mr. Irvin (*"no* 'g' ") Bussing of Brooklyn is with a bank.

There are about 8,000 manufacturers in this outfit—not so many people, not more than a handful compared with organized labor alone. They get around, though. They have what it takes to send their boys zipping over the country all year long to pressure educators, church leaders, farmers, and anyone who seems to need NAM inspiration. Their literature goes out in bales. They can set up Rapp-Coudert committees, rush through Congress their own legislation. According to their lights, it's damned good legislation, too—all directed against millions of people who wouldn't be permitted in the Waldorf-Astoria kitchen. All this comes under the heading of Free Enterprise. It also comes, though the affable gentlemen themselves do not think of it that way, under a heading that sent many a speaker's blood pressure up and caused others to quake. The phrase is "Class Hatred." BARBARA GILES.

Michaels

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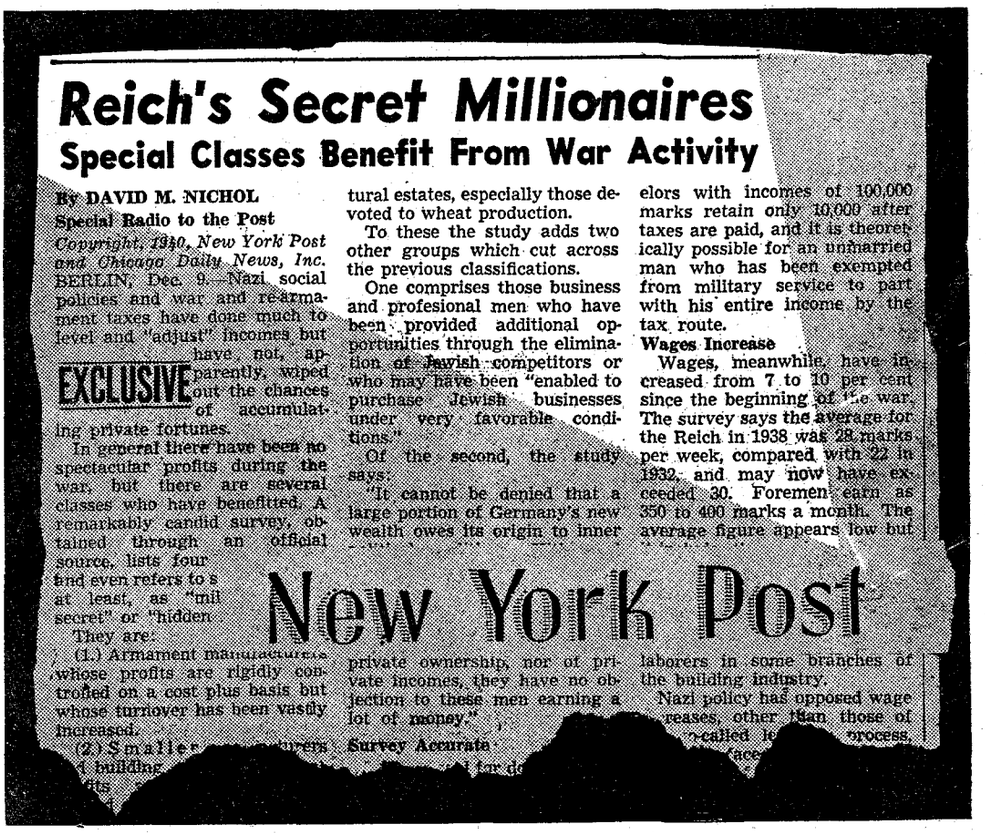
What Hitler Didn't Say

Der Fuehrer stole "a few sparks from the Promethean fire of socialism" in his recent speech to the German workers. But Reich capitalists get richer. An editorial article.

IN HIS recent speech to the German workers Hitler returned to the mood of the *Sturm und Drang* days of Nazism and sought to steal a few sparks from the Promethean fire of socialism to light up the desolate world of the fascist dictatorship. It was a singularly ungodlike performance; for all its bluster and brass, this was the voice of fear—the fear which haunts Germany's present masters when confronted with the masters of tomorrow, those whom Hitler addressed so patronizingly as "my German workers." Only an urgent need—the class need of the lords of finance and industry, who are the real wielders of power, to allay discontent, to kindle new hope, to deceive and seduce still again could have moved Hitler to go to such lengths in depicting the war as a struggle of the German workers against the capitalists of the world. In those words was the echo of profound inner weakness. (Mussolini must be hearing that echo too.) And so today's bestiality must be transmuted into future bliss. "Two worlds are in conflict, two philosophies of life. . . . What we are reconstructing is a world of cooperative labor. . . . This fight not only is a fight for the present, but especially a fight for the future. . . . When this war is over, the great work of creation is to begin in Germany."

On the other side of the conflict the need of the real masters of Britain in this crisis of their system is also great. Convulsion in far-off India shakes the ground under the City. The movement for a people's government and a people's peace grows. And so Churchill is at long last reported to be preparing to state "war aims"—not too specifically, of course, but in terms of those lofty universal moral principles which have always been upheld by the more predatory of the empire builders. Meanwhile there is the leader of his majesty's Labor Party, Ernest Bevin, to beguile the common herd with talk of "social security not for a small middle class or for those who may be merely possessors of property, but for the community as a whole."



Reich's Secret Millionaires

Special Classes Benefit From War Activity

By DAVID M. NICHOL
Special Radio to the Post
Copyright, 1940, New York Post and Chicago Daily News, Inc.
BERLIN, Dec. 9.—Nazi social policies and war and re-armament taxes have done much to level and "adjust" incomes but have not, apparently, wiped out the chances of accumulating private fortunes.

EXCLUSIVE

In general there have been no spectacular profits during the war, but there are several classes who have benefitted. A remarkably candid survey, obtained through an official source, lists four and even refers to s at least, as "mil secret" or "hidden

They are:

(1.) Armament manufacturers whose profits are rigidly controlled on a cost plus basis but whose turnover has been vastly increased.

(2.) Small e... buildin...

tural estates, especially those devoted to wheat production.

To these the study adds two other groups which cut across the previous classifications.

One comprises those business and profesional men who have been provided additional opportunities through the elimination of Jewish competitors or who may have been "enabled to purchase Jewish businesses under very favorable conditions."

Of the second, the study says:

"It cannot be denied that a large portion of Germany's new wealth owes its origin to inner ... private ownership, nor of private incomes, they have no objection to these men earning a lot of money."

Survey Accurate

elors with incomes of 100,000 marks retain only 10,000 after taxes are paid, and it is theoretically possible for an unmarried man who has been exempted from military service to part with his entire income by the tax route.

Wages Increase

Wages, meanwhile, have increased from 7 to 10 per cent since the beginning of the war. The survey says the average for the Reich in 1938 was 29 marks per week, compared with 22 in 1932, and may now have exceeded 30. Foremen earn as 350 to 400 marks a month. The average figure appears low but ... laborers in some branches of the building industry.

Nazi policy has opposed wage ...reases, other than those of ...called le... process.

New York Post

CAPITALISM IN GERMANY? *Here's what the Berlin correspondent of the NY "Post" and Chicago "Daily News" sent his papers on December 10. The "Post" carried it in its first edition, and then omitted it. The story of who's making money under Hitler.*

ROOSEVELT'S ACQUIESCENCE

Franklin D. Roosevelt, too, joins in the spirit of the thing and tells the convention of the Farm Bureau Federation: "To rearm effectively, however, means more than men and munitions. It means an equitable distribution of the wealth from our unparalleled material resources. . . ."

Clearly, a most fortunate war. Whichever side wins, "socialism" can't lose.

This pie-in-the-sky socialism is, of course, calculated fraud. When Hitler tells the German workers that in England and America "capitalism reigns supreme," that there is "poverty on one hand that baffles description, wealth on the other hand that equally baffles description," he is accurately describing the situation not alone in Britain and the United States, but in Germany as well. When Bevin paints a mythical social security resulting from the war, it is to persuade the British workers to acquiesce in the loss of their principal measure of tangible immediate security; the right to strike; it is to turn their eyes away from the vast insecurity and enslavement of the 300,000,000 people of India; it is to cajole them into abandoning their fight against this reactionary war. When Roosevelt promises an equitable distribution of wealth as a concomitant of the armaments program, it is to lull the people into ignoring the fact that guns are displacing butter, that the only distribution of wealth now taking place is from the public purse into the pockets of the munitions makers. Above all, these demagogic attempts to delude the masses into accepting shadow for substance—a typically fascist technique, whether it originates in Germany, England, or the United States—have as their purpose to reconcile the slaves to their slavery, to preserve at all costs the capitalist system with all its infamies and horrors.

NATIONAL SOCIALISM

Let us take a look at the National Socialist paradise which has arisen out of the blood-soaked grave of the German revolution of 1918-19, out of the Versailles Treaty, out of the reparations system and the Dawes and Young plans, out of the Social-Democratic policy of supporting the "lesser evil," out of the collaboration of the ruling classes of Britain, France, and the United States with Germany's Krupps and Thyssens and Schachts. It is not only in Germany that Hitler has fooled people into believing that he is "the representative of the have-nots," that capitalism in the Third Reich is in its death-throes, and socialism is in power. With the help of our own big business press, Hitler has likewise succeeded in confusing many sincere, democratic Americans. These news-

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papers always make a point of ostentatiously disbelieving everything the Fuehrer says except that he is against capitalism. On this point it suits their game to take him at his word. The New York *Sun* finds that "Hitler made a better Communist speech than Stalin ever made himself. He was full of concern for the workingman, full of venom for the fat, cigar-smoking capitalist." The *Herald Tribune* informs its readers that "Herr Hitler intends to smash the entire liberal-capitalistic system" and assures any doubters that "Herr Hitler means exactly what he says." The pseudo-liberal *Post* cannot resist the opportunity for a bit of malice: "Herr Hitler almost qualified for platform space at some of the poorer meetings in Union Square. . . . He gave to the world the theory (much bruited in the local Communist press) that there is no difference between the leading political parties in the democracies; that all of them speak for 'capitalism.'"

SELF-CENSORSHIP

These newspapers, of course, do a great service to fascism by accepting at face value its anti-capitalist pretensions. For were the truth to become known, the question might be asked: if Hitler is out to destroy capitalism, why doesn't he start at home? That capitalism not merely exists in Germany but is flourishing under the fascist dictatorship is clear from evidence furnished by this very same *Post* which attempts to make a Communist out of Hitler. Only two days before the *Post* editorial on Hitler's speech, it published a dispatch from Berlin by David M. Nichol. The headline over this three-column story read: "Reich's Secret Millionaires." It contains highly significant information. But what is equally significant is the fact that the *Post*, after publishing the story in its night edition—which appears in the morning—deleted it from all later editions! Could it possibly be that this strange act of self-censorship on the part of a professedly anti-Nazi paper, which is owned by a member of the right-wing cabal of the American Labor Party, was due to the fact that the dispatch did not fit the fable of the identity of fascism and Communism, of the alliance of Germany and the Soviet Union? Is it possible, too, that another motive for this suppression was that readers might see in the facts which Mr. Nichol presented a not-so-faint resemblance to the situation in the United States?

As for the facts themselves. Mr. Nichol cites a recent Nazi survey, which he has received from an official source, as listing four groups of secret or hidden millionaires that have benefited from the war: armaments makers; smaller manufacturers and building contractors who have profited indirectly from war production; merchants and manufacturers not connected with war activity but who have benefited from Nazi trade policies; and owners of large agricultural estates. In addition, there are two other groups of beneficiaries: business and professional men who have secured advantages through the elimination of Jewish competitors or the purchase of Jewish businesses at very favorable terms; and Nazi politicians who have enriched themselves through being placed in leading economic positions.

MERCHANTS OF DEATH

The situation for German big business is, in fact, even more favorable than is indicated in Mr. Nichol's dispatch. He writes that the profits of armaments makers "are rigidly controlled on a cost plus basis," but that the turnover of the manufacturers "has been vastly increased." Hitler in his speech boasted that while in other countries munitions makers are "pocketing up to 160 percent dividends," "I believe 6 percent sufficient." This statement is a camouflaged lie. It was this same kind of cost plus system which enabled American industrialists to make tremendous profits during the last war. Though contracts were on a cost plus basis, the increase in the turnover and the padding of costs enabled the shipbuilding industry to make 313 percent profit *on its capital stock* in 1916. In 1917 the aluminum industry made 290 percent profit, the sulphur industry, 3,514 percent, and the electrical machinery and appliances industry, 18,204 percent!

A great deal also depends on the definition of "cost" in the Nazi lexicon. Manufacturers working on war contracts in the United States recently received a generous concession from the Roosevelt administration permitting them to write off the cost of plant and equipment expansion at a faster rate. But in Germany *there is no limit to the amount that can be charged off for depreciation.* Thus it can be seen that Hitler's measly 6 percent becomes a veritable bonanza for the German merchants of death.

At the same time monopoly grows more rapidly than before the establishment of the Nazi regime. In the beginning of 1938 about 70 percent of German production had become monopolized, as against 40 percent in 1933. The little fish are swallowed by the big who are in turn devoured by the very biggest. Further light on the kind of "socialism" operating in Germany today was cast by a news item published obscurely in the *Herald Tribune* of Oct. 7, 1939, which cited figures of the Reich statistical bureau as showing that "Since the rise of National Socialism to power in Germany in 1933, the upper income groups in the population have steadily increased their share of the national income."

Mandell

"She must have thought you said 'Russian dressing.'"

The middle class, on the other hand, in whose name fascism took power, has suffered corrosion not only of its hopes, but of its very means of livelihood. From 1935 to 1938 the number of independent cobblers declined from 161,000 to 141,000. According to the Reich Ministry of Labor, by the beginning of 1939, more than 100,000 independent butchers, bakers, tailors, and barbers had been forced out of business into the ranks of the working class.

THE WORKERS

The situation of the workers, in whose behalf Hitler professes to be waging war, has likewise deteriorated. Mr. Nichol writes that wages "have increased 7 to 10 percent since the beginning of the war." It is not clear whether this refers to hourly rates or weekly earnings. The fact is that at the outset of hostilities general wage cuts were promulgated, but they had to be withdrawn because of the opposition of the workers. In all probability this 7 to 10 percent wage increase, if true—which isn't at all certain in view of the notorious unreliability of Nazi labor statistics—is due to the fact that shortly after the outbreak of the war working hours in war industries were lengthened from forty-eight to sixty. Moreover, rising living costs and the truly fantastic direct and indirect taxes have cut the purchasing power of the worker's earnings below the 1932 figure. This, together with the food restrictions and the reduced production of consumption goods, means a sharply lowered standard of living for the overwhelming majority of the population. Richard O. Boyer, after two months in Germany, reported in the newspaper *PM* of October 4: "The Germans are now eating 41 percent less fat than they did before the war; 43 percent less meat; 71 percent fewer eggs; and 11 percent less sugar." Think what this means not only for the present generation, but especially for the future citizens of the Third Reich.

Germany, Italy, and Japan—conditions in the latter two are even worse—are the masterpieces of "capitalism the creator." But they differ from the so-called capitalist democracies only in degree, and even this difference is fast disappearing as the British and American governments borrow a leaf—and a fig-leaf—from fascism in the war for imperialist mastery. There is only one country without millionaires, without war profiteers, without fabulous riches alongside of fabulous poverty, without Jew-baiting or Negro-baiting, without fascism or the threat of fascism. That is why the Soviet Union is at peace. That is why the Soviet leaders need no *ersatz* future socialism to make their people forget the present. Over that vast expanse of territory socialism is already achieved and Communism is on the wing, and the people are masters of today and of tomorrow.

A. B. MAGIL.

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Editors
A. B. Magil, Ruth McKenney, Bruce Minton, Joseph North.

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★

Gathering Storm

The clouds were gathering, the skies darkening, and it took no political weather prophet last week to predict storms ahead. The President returned from his Caribbean cruise, during which he appraised some of the real estate picked up last summer only to find that the ground at home had been well-furrowed for some startling developments in domestic and foreign policy. On the one hand, there was William Knudsen's sudden discovery that only a six-day working week could overcome the lagging production in the defense industries. This was followed by a tear-jerking letter to the machine tool manufacturers citing a "terrible urgency," the exact nature of which is not described. All this had been preceded, of course, by the intervention of Rear Admiral Ray Spear who earlier demanded the scrapping of the Wage-Hour Act and the Walsh-Healey act. On the other hand, the British government smelled the climax, and rushed in with a direct appeal for cash. And the big-hearted Mrs. Roosevelt, in a specially publicized interview, seconded Churchill's request, offering outright gifts "from your pocket and mine." The President himself added a fine touch of hysteria to this perfectly transparent business by telling a Warm Springs audience he'd be back in March "if the world survives." And a group of thirty-four educators, "spontaneously organized" by the chairman of the Princeton University chapter of the William Allen White committee took the cue to demand the declaration of a full national emergency.

We are facing a stampede, organized by the highest officials in the government in cahoots with their architects of public opinion, and the editors are holding the presses so that every publicity statement hits the front headlines. It's not a public discussion: it's a hysteria. Knudsen is not explaining, for example, just why working men must put in six days a week when nine million are still unemployed, nor why some industries are way ahead of their schedules (see Leonard Engel in *PM* for December 16). Nor has anyone explained just why Britain needs cash with some $5,000,000,000 in securities and investments lying around in the empire, or just what Britain will do with cash if Knudsen's production schedules are lagging behind. But it is clear that "aid to Britain" and "more production" have become the slogans under which the men who rule American industry are trying to achieve their innermost desires: the smashing of the labor movement, the garrotting of democracy. National defense, as Philip Murray retold the American Farm Bureau Federation, is becoming a national racket.

A recent issue of *Congressional Intelligence,* a service of Washington information, gives the whole thing away:

> Both employers and employees will be vitally interested in a program of so-called model labor laws, already in draft stage, which are expected to be offered in more than forty states in which state legislatures meet next year. In essence they are the most restrictive against labor that has been proposed since the World War . . . the bills are an outgrowth of a series of conferences of states attorneys general and other state officials, originally called by the Justice Department. . . . Not yet public and not yet "officially approved," the present draft of the bills have the effect of making negligence in national defense almost a prima facie case of sabotage, would prevent picketing by an effective "keep away" provision, suspend the warrant process in these types of arrest, and other similar provisions.

Fortunately, labor is not taking this lying down, no matter how many times William Green "crooks the pregnant hinges of his knee" to kiss the boots of monopoly government. As the article by Frank Lewis on page 9 of this issue shows, many thousands of workers are vigorously fighting for their rights, defending democracy where it most needs defense—on the home front.

Exit Laval

The fall of Pierre Laval adds a bizarre and ironic twist to the purple politics of the Vichy camarilla. Laval was the chief figure in the recent negotiations with Germany. As vice premier, he was also the designated successor to Marshal Petain and considered himself the real power in Vichy. The story is that he was about to oust Petain, or at least pull some wool over the Marshal's eyes. This gave his enemies the chance to oust him, acting in the Marshal's name. Together with his associate, the ambassador to Germany, Count Fernand de Brinon, Laval has been arrested, and his post eliminated. The chief beneficiary seems to be Pierre Etienne Flandin, a major reactionary figure who has been in the background of French affairs for some years. During the Munich crisis, Flandin was an outspoken Hitlerite, and he represents French imperialist circles who favor outright collaboration with Germany, although not necessarily with the Axis.

This is the second upheaval in Vichy politics within three months. Our readers will recall an article in New Masses for October 1 which discussed the ouster of four former ministers in the original Vichy government. They were adherents of the so-called "Latin bloc" who strove, in alliance with Italian policy, to establish a counterweight to Germany on the continent. Laval was also a pro-Latinite, but he seems to have sold the Germans on the idea that they could achieve their objectives through him. And he is reported to have favored granting Germany bases in the colonies and the right of passage through French ports to Africa.

The full implications of this development are still unclear. Hitler may have no use for Laval any longer and may prefer to work with stronger tools. On the other hand, this may also presage an increased independence on the part of those sections of the French ruling class who want better terms from Germany, and would like to play for time at least until the development of the war becomes clearer. That there is definitely such a trend is deducible from the British and American diplomatic machinations with Vichy, of which the appointment of Admiral Leahy is one example, and perhaps the mission of Colonel Donovan another.

Crisis of Fascism

Mussolini continues to take it on the chin, that grossly overextended, sandpapered chin which has been the butt of some of Gropper's best cartoons. The big news last week was the British assault on Sidi Barrani, in the northwest corner of Egypt. Some 26,000 Italian troops are reported prisoners. Great quantities of munitions and equipment have been taken. The Italian penetration of Egypt is cancelled and the fighting is even reported in Libya itself. Meanwhile, Greek armies are pressing down the high-road to Valona, the strategic Albanian port on the Adriatic Sea which is a terminus for the Albanian oil lines. In the central zone, heavy snows plus increased Italian resistance seem to have slowed the Greeks, but they still threaten the key city of Elbasan. Obviously, even a renewed Italian offensive will do little more than stabilize the fronts in Albania this winter, if it does that.

Italian reverses have a dual significance. For one thing, the general British position in the eastern Mediterranean is greatly strengthened. Churchill gains time in which to bring up even more colonial troops, to fasten a foothold on the continent via Greece, and prepare to meet the anticipated German offensive in the spring. The psychological effect is itself a force at a moment when the British people are suffering intensely.

Most important, however, is the repercussion within Italy. The resignations of Badoglio, de Vecchi, and others, as we indicated last week, were symptomatic of deep divisions within the ruling class. But the revival of those street gangs which kept Mussolini in power during the critical 1924 days, the death penalties for hoarding, the feverish conferences of fascist officials to bolster morale —all these are proof of a spreading crisis in all ranks of Italian life, a general revulsion against the war and all its works. The Italian press fulminates with excuses, but *Regima Fascista,* Farinacci's newspaper, now reveals that the 170,000,000,000 lire which were supposed to equip a first-rate army have been mishandled. Disgust with the war is reported even among sergeants and colonels, which means that even the fascist *elite* are losing confidence in their command and their government. The crisis in Italy has only begun.

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It may be prolonged, and may take on very uneven and surprising forms. But in retrospect, it may also prove to have been the turning point of this stage of the war.

More important than anything else, however, is the following fact: after all the castor oil tortures, after the fulsome speeches, after the drainage of the Pontine marshes, after the humbug of a classless society and the corporate state, fascism as a *system has exposed itself as unable to give the Italian people anything worth fighting for.* It has brought them only interminable warfare, years of misery, and now national dishonor. It may even expose them to occupation by both Britain and Germany. Here, therefore, is the rebuttal to those who believed that fascism was some miraculous solution to the crisis of the capitalist world. It is an especially important lesson at a time when the American people are being reluctantly dragooned into the first phases of American fascism.

Eyes on Manchester

IT WAS one of the myths of 1940 that war was the only alternative to the appeasement of fascism. This myth is particularly widespread among liberals, some of whom have, in the name of this myth, abandoned everything they professed to believe and have plumped for participation in the war. In the name of this war, many people have either nullified their potential strength for progress, or else have openly endorsed the most reactionary assault on the positions of the American labor movement. But take a look at Britain. In the midst of the bombardments, a great people's movement is emerging, a movement which insists that the alternative to the war is not at all a peace on Hitler's terms. The real alternative, says the Peoples Convention which meets in Manchester England on January 12, is the mobilization of the people in defense of their living standards, in opposition to the government shelter policy, in friendship with the USSR, in ousting the war government.

Five hundred leading Britons have endorsed the call to this convention. Among them are scores of local labor leaders, the Dean of Canterbury, D. N. Pritt (the Socialist whom the Labor Party expelled last spring), and a number of other figures, including R. Palme Dutt. Here is the beginning of a great self-assertion of the British people, breaking sharply with the policies of the labor lieutenants of British imperialism. Our solidarity with this convention and its objectives represents the most enduring form of "aid to Britain." And such solidarity will not only keep the American people out of war, but will help the British people to bring this war to a close by a people's peace, a democratic, anti-fascist peace in Europe.

The Marquess Passes

LORD Lothian was one of the foremost strategists of British imperialism. He received his early training during the consolidation of British rule in South Africa after the Boers had been crushed. He was one of Lord Milner's bright young men, who specialized in the problem of maintaining the empire in the era of its deepest crisis. After 1916, he served Lloyd George as private secretary, clear through the war, the haggling at Versailles, the rapacious expansion of the empire in the Near East, and the bitter period of intervention against the Bolshevik Revolution. Characteristically, he took the post of undersecretary for India in 1931, at the high point of India's battle for independence. The title of Marquess of Lothian brought him a seat in the House of Lords and no less than a 28,000-acre estate, where he became among the most outspoken advocates of an understanding with Germany. He visited Hitler several times, hobnobbed with the elite of the Nazi gangsters, and his writings and speeches from 1934 to 1938 are typical of the Chamberlain era. The eulogies of the capitalist press make it appear that Lothian underwent a great democratic conversion after Munich comparable to his conversion from Catholicism to Christian Science. The truth is, of course, that Lothian was among the first of the Tories to realize that the game with Germany had misfired, that German imperialism was loth to take on a war against the USSR, and demanded, as the price of continued cooperation with Britain, a decisive share in the empire. That is to say, after the mean and despicable conniving with Hitler had failed, Lothian insisted that instead of preserving peace by collective security, Britain adopt the alternative line, long prepared in advance—namely war. But since the Tories had themselves undermined their position both at home and on the continent, they were compelled to strike some bargain with the remaining great capitalist power, the United States. A few days before war was declared Lothian became ambassador to this country, where he steadily advanced the policy of inviting the American people into the war. His last speech at Baltimore literally requested American naval assistance on the high seas. Lothian passed away a month after Chamberlain, and his death is unquestionably a blow to both the British empire and its American friends. The British people are having such a miserable Christmas, there is so much to weep about in England that tears for Lord Lothian might well be rationed.

Morgenthau's Doubletalk

IN THE doubletalk of the Roosevelt administration "draft wealth" is simply a synonym for "soak the poor." Henry Morgenthau, Jr., Secretary of the Treasury, is no great shakes in matters of finance, but he seems to be quite adept in the semantics of political demagogy. He is not content to announce merely that the government is planning to eliminate tax exemption from a new issue of $500,000,000 short-term defense notes, but must adorn it with the pretentious statement that the government "should draft money as well as men." Now Morgenthau knows as well as anyone that his mild proposal has not the slightest connection with drafting wealth. In fact, most men of wealth favor doing away with tax-exempt bonds because they count on receiving higher interest rates from the government in return for the small taxes they will pay.

The purpose of Morgenthau's statement was to sweeten another kind of pill. He announced at the same time that low-denomination defense bonds (read war bonds) would be sold to the public in the manner of the Liberty Loan and War Stamp drives of 1917-18. This is merely another scheme to pay for armaments out of the pockets of the people. Several months ago, Jerome Frank, chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission, burst into print with a proposal to raise $15,000,000,000 annually for war purposes by reducing expenditures for civilian goods through stiff sales and income taxes and forced loans to the government. Higher taxes in the low-income brackets and on articles of consumption are already under consideration. Now the Morgenthau proposal is a further step in line with the Frank plan. Even though the purchase of these bonds is as yet projected on a voluntary basis, the high-pressure tactics of the Liberty Loan drives could be used to brand those who refused to buy as little short of traitors. In its fiscal policy, as in other spheres, the administration is increasingly emulating the legalized brigandage of the fascist dictatorships.

Too Many Colleges?

WE HAVE repeatedly warned that a war economy means not only strangulation of the labor movement and the Bill of Rights, but of educational and cultural services as well. This warning was bluntly confirmed by the annual report of the Carnegie Foundation of New York. According to Dr. Frederick P. Keppel, the Foundation's president, there are "far more" colleges and universities in the United States than the nation can afford. "In the years to come," Dr. Keppel calmly prophesies, "many of these are bound to disappear."

Americans will be startled to learn that a nation which spends $15,000,000,000 for armaments cannot afford colleges for even that fraction of the population which is now privileged to attend them. The blackout of education was the first consequence of the military economy introduced by the Nazis. Under the slogan of "sacrifice for defense," reaction in this country is pushing toward the same goal.

This is the meaning of the widespread attacks on education featured with delight by the nation's press. Another symptom of this fascist-minded drive was the announcement last week by the National Association of Manufacturers to the effect that it was drawing up a blacklist of books dealing with economics, politics, and sociology used in the nation's schools. This blatant example of outside interference by a reactionary pressure group coincides with the effort of big business to teach the virtues of lower wages and longer hours.

It is only in this context that the Rapp-

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Coudert witch hunt against the educational system of New York can be properly interpreted. The attempt to smear Brooklyn College, a tax-supported institution, under the guise of smoking out subversive influences, is a deliberate part of the campaign to liquidate school budgets as wasteful extravagances. As is indicated by Dr. Harry F. Ward elsewhere in this issue, an effort is being made to prepare the public mind for the most drastic attack on the schools this country has ever witnessed.

Recognizing the close tie-up between the attack on schools and on the labor movement, the New York CIO Council, to which 400,000 wage-earners are affiliated through their unions, has indicated its firm support of the AFL Teachers Unions in their defense against the Coudert inquisition. Strong protests have been voiced by student and citizen rallies against the attempt of reactionary members of the Board of Higher Education to act against teachers before the courts have finally decided on the refusal of union members to testify before a one-man secret committee.

"Guilty" of Communism

NO VIOLENCE, no illegal act of any kind was charged against Alan Shaw of Oklahoma City. He was sentenced to ten years in prison and fined $5,000 *for membership in the Communist Party*. Possession of Marxist literature was the evidence against him. Twenty-two-year-old Alan Shaw is one of twelve Oklahoma citizens indicted for that "crime," under a state criminal syndicalism law passed during the Palmer raids in 1920. Two of them have been tried; the first, Robert Wood, received the same sentence and fine as Shaw. All defendants are now out on total bail of $57,000—originally set at over $1,000,000 but reduced through the efforts of the International Labor Defense supported by public protest.

"This means," exulted Asst. County Atty. John Eberle after the Shaw conviction, "that anyone who is a member of the Communist Party is subject to conviction under the criminal syndicalism law and liable to receive the maximum penalty. . . ." But does it? Plenty of progressives in Oklahoma and other states say no. They are backing the ILD in its determination to appeal these cases to the US Supreme Court if necessary. Liberals well know from experience that a Red scare only begins with "Reds"—it doesn't stop until every progressive has been hauled in. They know that these defendants' sole "offense" was fighting for the unemployed and hungry. And they are determined that it *won't* happen here.

Negroes and "Defense"

NO DOUBT the naval officers who had thirteen Negro messmen of the *USS Philadelphia* "undesirably discharged" for protesting anti-Negro discrimination, thought to teach all Negroes in the navy a "good lesson." And perhaps they did—but not the sort of lesson intended. Exactly the same "crime" has now been committed by six Negro messmen of the *USS Davis:* a letter of protest to the Pittsburgh *Courier,* Negro newspaper, detailing instances of segregation and petty meanness on the part of white officers. "We fight shoulder to shoulder with our white shipmates," the writers point out. "If they die, we die, so why are we segregated in our work?"

The same question has been raised and answered in rather curious fashion by Walter White, secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, in a *Saturday Evening Post* article, issue of December 14. Mr. White catalogs all the ugly discriminations against his race in our armed forces, but tells us the Negro's "hope" is that President Roosevelt will do something about it. Roosevelt!—who himself issued the order continuing the policy of segregation in army and navy. According to Mr. White, American Negroes are eager to participate fully in the defense of this country against "either Hitler or Stalin." The coupling of these names, a fantastic distortion in any case, is especially preposterous here. Hitler treats Negroes as he treats Jews—and he treats Jews little worse than America's rulers treat Negroes. In the land of socialism, as any Negro who has been there can tell Mr. White, racial discrimination (economic, political, or social) is punishable as a crime.

Warning!

WE WANT to warn our readers against the election fraud perpetrated by the Associated Press every four years. On December 13 the AP announced what purported to be the final official figures for the presidential election. Contrary to claims, these figures are not official; they are merely the tabulations which have been gathered by AP correspondents in various states. This warning is especially necessary in regard to the vote for Earl Browder, Communist candidate, which the AP gives as 48,789. A glance at the tabulations reveals that the AP has recorded not a single write-in vote for Browder in New York or any of the other states in which the Communist Party was not on the ballot. These votes—unless the authorities decide to ignore them—will increase the Communist total by many thousands.

In 1936 the AP played the same trick, announcing a ridiculously low figure for the Communist vote, which was later proved false.

Unrest in Palestine

IN AMERICA the Jewish people are being told that in order to further the interests of their fellow-Jews in Palestine, they must support British imperialism and its reactionary war. But in Palestine itself Jews are on strike against British policy. When 2,000 refugees from Nazi persecution who had entered the country "illegally" (legal immigration has been reduced practically to the vanishing point) were brought to Haifa last week for deportation, a general protest strike was declared by the entire Jewish community. The strike spread throughout Palestine.

This comes on the heels of the *Patria* tragedy in which fifty-five lives were lost when a ship bearing 1,771 Jewish refugees exploded after they had been refused admission into what is supposed to be the Jewish homeland. Now a second tragedy of even greater magnitude has struck a boat-load of Jewish refugees. On their way to Palestine from Bulgaria, more than 200 men, women and children lost their lives in the Sea of Marmara, near Turkey, when a storm wrecked the unseaworthy vessel in which they were traveling.

The cynical attitude of the British government toward this whole question of Jewish refugees was revealed by Lord Lothian shortly before his death when, in reply to a protest from the Jewish People's Committee, he declared that among the refugees on the *Patria* were Gestapo agents. And there are men like Rabbi Stephen Wise who repeat this shameful apology for imperialist barbarism. While Jews are being expelled from Palestine, 500 Polish nobles, generals, and politicians, including some choice anti-Semites, were recently admitted into that country as refugees. Obviously, the Jewish people can find salvation in neither Berlin, nor London—nor Washington.

Ship of Hope

ONE hundred and fifty thousand Spanish refugees in France are breathlessly awaiting further word of the American Rescue Ship Mission. It is a race with time. Will the agents of Franco get to them first, carrying the dreaded death-list in hand? Or will this ship that has become the symbol of all that is good in America, arrive before? No man who wants a better world can afford to ignore the status of this great humanitarian effort. Helen Keller said so in her letter to 2,000 ministers urging them to remember the men and women in the concentration camps when the Christmas sermons are being preached. She is the honorary chairman of the group that seeks $300,000 to get the boat off to Europe. It will be recalled that the CIO passed a resolution at Atlantic City urging all aid to trade union individuals now in France's prison camps. Kathryn Lewis wrote to Dorothy Parker, a sponsor of the Rescue Ship, notifying her of this decision. Many unions are already discussing specific aid.

Of great importance is the assurance by Mexico's new president, Avila Camacho, to honor all the arrangements made by Cardenas with Vichy to admit as many as 100,000 Spanish refugees. The former president of Mexico has agreed to act as honorary chairman of the Pan-American Coordinating Committee on behalf of the ship that will proceed to European waters under Latin-American registry. The Mexican government, furthermore, has promised all aid to secure safe passage for the ship.

This venture promises to be one of the greatest efforts on behalf of humanity in modern times. The editors urge all who can to forward checks to Helen Keller, Rescue Ship Mission, at 200 Fifth Ave., New York City.

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Readers' Forum

The Winners

Here are the prize-winning letters in the ten-book contest, except for the fourth prize which led the Readers' Forum last week. Again (see page 12), every entry really won, but five-dollar bills are scarce, so the following is—

First Prize

DEAR MISS MCKENNEY: The first whole book I ever read was *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and the second one was *Pilgrim's Progress*. These were Christmas gifts from my father to my sister and me when we were respectively eleven and nine years old; no doubt these books were meant as sure antidotes for yellow-back novels in the lives of young hearts hungry for a world outside that of a country community in the corn belt before the advent of automobiles and radios.

I read *Uncle Tom's Cabin* at least five times and parts of it many more—each time weeping over the plight of Uncle Tom and the death of little Eva. *Pilgrim's Progress* puzzled me. The trials and tribulations of the Christian moved me not one whit but I read the book through twice attempting to see what it was really trying to say. Only years later did I find out—or think I did.

During my high school days I read every book in the school library with no vivid impression left from any of them. However, one summer I worked as a hired girl in the home of a neighbor in order to buy school books for my senior year. This farmer was accorded considerable respect by his neighbors because of his business acuity and his wide reading habits. Nevertheless he was regarded as a little queer because he professed to be a spiritualist. He had a huge library.

After my day's work of twelve to sixteen hours I would pick up volume after volume, scan through the contents, and read until I was satisfied that I did, or did not, want to finish the book. After searching through endless subjects such as phrenology, spiritualism, the Bible, and farming, I came upon two books which "did something to me." These were Victor Hugo's *Les Miserables* and *Ingersoll's Forty-four Lectures*. I became gaunt and circle-eyed that summer from burning midnight kerosene. When I returned home that fall the two books came with me as a loan from my employer's library. I tried to get my teachers to explain many questions I had regarding *Les Miserables*, but only two of them had ever heard of the book and one of these, my English instructor, said she did not think it was the right kind of literature for a young girl to be reading. Ingersoll's lectures I understood better, and bought a copy of my own to live by.

There were no more impressive books until college. Then came *The Life of Louis Pasteur*, by Radot. It definitely started me on a path of worship for science. *The History of a Mind* by Duclaux may be a more objective treatment of Pasteur and his contributions, but I doubt very much whether it could have done for me at that time what Radot's warm treatment of the man did. No prejudice of a son-in-law could take away the importance of disproving the theory of spontaneous generation—of proving that all life comes from a previous life—and of laying the foundations for modern medicine, namely, prevention of infectious diseases. His thesis that "chance favors the prepared mind" became my guiding star for many years.

For a long time after this, books became merely guides for laboratory research. There were small peaks even among these, such as *The Origin of Species, Voyage of the Beagle,* Morgan's *Critique on the Theory of Evolution,* and *The Mechanism of Mendelian Heredity*—and some others. A little later *The Life of Anna Howard Shaw* came my way. The story of her struggles struck a sympathetic note in my make-up when I needed it most. I had begun to realize that I was a woman working very largely in a man's world. Her triumphs gave me courage to face my own difficulties until I found myself wishing that she was more of a scientist than she was a preacher of the gospel. Then when I heard her lecture and attribute her successes to a Higher Power I lost all interest in her life except as a piece of history.

Three more years in a university did not bring to me impressive books but scientists whom I had read about, heard about, and whose works I had read in college; also more laboratories and more research with a growing respect for research workers and their discoveries. It was during these years that I became acutely conscious of the enormous gap which exists between discoveries in science and the application of these discoveries in the lives of the great masses of people. An attempt to help span this gap in the field of public health nearly cost me my life and made me retire from professional activities for a while. Then came the economic crash.

For about five years I was thrust from an artificial life of the college and university into a real life of human beings struggling with their environment for their very existence. I began a new kind of research—one for an explanation of the economic depression we were in. Came a leaflet then—hardly called a book—which again turned me on a new course. That was in 1932. I secured printed platforms of the Republican, the Democratic, the Socialist, and the Communist parties. Only in the Communist Party platform was there any pledge to try to bring better health to the people of the United States! Following this discovery, out of long days and months of searching the printed page, four books stand out as sign posts which directed me on a road leading to a point where I saw a union between the fields of technical and social sciences. The four are: *The Theory and Practice of Socialism,* by Strachey (please don't laugh—or cry). This book really changed my world, or should I say, me? *The Letters of Lincoln Steffens.* This book now walks beside Radot's *Pasteur* and the team links my two worlds. *Socialized Medicine in the Soviet Union,* by Sigerist. This one has shown me that the gap I struggled so hard to make narrower really can be bridged under the right conditions. *History of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union.* This brought complete realism and showed the process.

Denver, Col. C. S.

Second

DEAR MISS MCKENNEY: You have asked for lists of our ten books and here is mine. I would like to take a lot of space explaining why these are my ten books but letters of this sort must necessarily be brief. So here goes (with a comment or two).

1: An unknown book, picturing the evils of the world (especially the non-Protestant world) as seen through the eyes of the Methodist Church. This book, read at the age of nine, taught me that there was a thing called "religious intolerance" and made me, right under the outraged eyes of my grandmother, seek the companionship of every Catholic, Jew, Mohammedan, and Buddhist I could scare up out of the bushes. I cannot describe the effect this book had on me and on my family. It began a feud between my mother, my grandmother, and myself that only ended after I had read

2: *Ivanhoe* by Walter Scott, had fallen in love with Rebecca, and had taken to meeting a very beautiful (or so I thought) reincarnation of that character in one of our run-down barns of an afternoon. Soon after this I was "placed" in a military school where it was hoped that I would learn that the only Church was the Protestant and that the only "people" were white and that Jews were "the betrayers of Christ."

It goes almost without saying that I read nothing of note during the three-year stay in "military school" and that the whole experience made me a violent partisan of internationalism, a hater of anti-Semitism and racial prejudice before I really knew what the words meant.

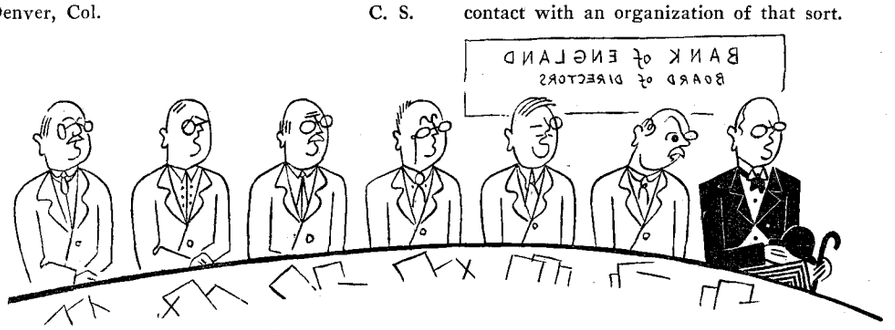
3: The next book that aroused me, and I mean just that, was *Three Soldiers* by John Dos Passos. I read it exactly six times in less than six months and gave a swell report of it in my high school literature class for which I was expelled from school for a whole week.

4: *Moby Dick* opened up literary America to me. And it gave me my first burst of love for my part of the western hemisphere; caused me to explore American literature and led me, later on, to

5: Modern America and *God's Little Acre,* by Erskine Caldwell, the first book I had read that showed me the real America of my day. And even though Mr. Caldwell's book has quite obvious faults, it pushed me ahead in the understanding of a great many very serious things.

6: I followed Caldwell's book with many critical studies of modern America, the most exciting being *The Executioner Waits,* by Josephine Herbst, because in this book I met my own family face to face for the first time. It was a thrilling (perhaps I ought to say frightening) experience. And it made me look, later when I was riding the freights, at America (of course an empty belly helped) more critically. My ambition was to join the IWW.

7: *Man's Fate,* by Malraux, jerked me ahead another step and because of it I attended a meeting of the Young Communist League, my first actual contact with an organization of that sort.



"I say, old man, Ralph Ingersoll says our way of life is gone."

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8: I've always been interested in books. I've known that some of the books that people said were "good" were really "bad" and that some of the books that people said were "bad" were really "good." But I didn't know why until I read, and reread, *The Great Tradition,* by Granville Hicks. I bought five copies of this book, one for myself and the rest for my more liberal-minded friends at the University of Washington. From this book on "in," well, it was easy sailing.

9: *What Is Philosophy?* by Howard Selsam straightened out a lot of things and with the reading of

10: *The History of the CPSU,* the greatest book of them all, I suddenly found myself at the goal I've been aiming at all my life.

And, if I'm not cheating, I'd like to add another "book" to the list. The series of articles by Mike Gold in the *Daily Worker* seems to me to be one of the finest contributions to literary criticism in all the history of criticism in America. After reading (in part) his *The Great Tradition: Can the Literary Renegades Destroy It?* I am furnished with a real weapon for the understanding of much of what I read. Especially of No. 8 on my list—Mr. Hicks' book that opened up so much to me a couple of years ago. In fact, why not change Mr. Gold's work to No. 8 on my list? Hicks' book may be important to me historically but Mike Gold's book is more to the point.

I hate to omit *An American Tragedy* from the list. I talked about this book so much, some years back, that I talked myself right out of the best job I've ever had. How my boss did hate that book and Mr. Dreiser! (I'll bet he hates him even more in this war year.)

Pacific Grove, Calif. G. H.

And Third

But Sophia S. forgot to send her address. Since her letter was post-marked New York, will she come in for her prize books, or send an address to receive them?

DEAR MISS MCKENNEY: Did I hear you ask for letters about Ten Terrific Books? The last time that I wrote to an author on literary subjects was when I was eleven years old. I had read a current book by Mary Roberts Rinehart called *Lost Ecstasy,* in which a society girl marries a cowboy; my opinions about both cowboys and society girls were decided ones. And being not exactly shy, I thought it only fitting that Mrs. Rinehart should know that I considered the hero one swell guy and the heroine an awful sissy. Besides opinions, I enclosed crayon drawings of all the characters in the book.

Before this time, I can remember being spurred into action by another story, *The Little Red Hen.* I finished that tale with an active dislike for its main character, a most smug and bourgeois bird. The suspicion that the pig and the duck and the rat's side had never been presented, and that maybe they were busy, too, tormented me. Besides, the hen did not trouble to impress them with any true need for cooperation, and I frankly believed that she really wanted to eat all the bread herself anyway. Be as it may, I rewrote the story ending it with the hen becoming chicken a la king on toast made from the very bread she so virtuously hoarded.

When I had graduated from Western stories and the Bobbsey Twins into high school, the first book to hit me right where it mattered was *The Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens.* The teacher of our Cicero class had us read it so that we could see how political machines worked in the Roman days, personally hoping that we would find out a thing or two about ditto in our own times. Fortunately, the lesson struck home.

During this time, I had a violent George Bernard Shaw period followed by a Gertrude Stein period. With Shaw, I enjoyed holding up to the light those sacred cows of "civilization as we know it"—religious dogmatism, male superiority, the double standard, military heroism. Gertrude Stein I liked because of one book called *Three Lives.* She managed to do a three-dimensional study of a Negro girl with complete sympathy and a remarkable lack of self-consciousness about her subject. To round out my high school reading, I might mention *A Doll's House,* by Ibsen, which delighted me because I had found somebody else besides me who thought that women were meant to be more than ornaments to patronizing males.

College meant reading so much so fast that it is hard to light on any one book that I can't possibly forget. Spinoza, perhaps, was invaluable help in removing that fear of materialism with which most young idealists grow up. A stiff encounter with Spinoza's theorems proving that matter includes everything from the meanest to the highest in values, dispelled forever the old spirit-versus-clay runaround.

A few years later I was to encounter *Man's Hope,* by Malraux, and to solve another conflict. How could one devote oneself to the esthetic and to social problems at the same time? I knew these arty liberals who seemed to have accomplished it, and yet I instinctively knew that they hadn't. Part of their mental makeup was only facade. But in the closing pages where Manuel realizes that everything he experiences—the music of Beethoven which he hears, the struggle of the Spanish people which he shares—all merge into making him a more complete individual, I realized, too, that all my experiences could achieve dignity only if they became part of a great movement, the aim of which is to achieve dignity for all.

My latest real experience was a book that you mentioned, *The History of the CPSU.* Reading it was like bringing into focus a pair of field glasses. Events and figures which had formerly seemed only dimly related emerged in clear shapes and colors. At the time I read it, I was a bewildered Young Democrat, wondering why the hell there was so much talk in the organization of administration jobs, factions, and Red-baiting, and so little about making the New Deal work. For every paunchy politician, for every hotel-room sell-out of the rank and file, I found a searching explanation in this lucid history. And the chapter on dialectical materialism is magnificent. It is compact enough to keep as a constant guide, yet leaves nothing to be misunderstood.

New York City. SOPHIA S.

Loans to China

TO NEW MASSES: Your editorial, "Behind the Loan," in the December 10 issue draws attention to a significant new development in American-Chinese relations. I would like to make a few additional comments. On November 30, the American government announced the extension of new credits, totaling $100,000,000, to the Chungking government. Half of this sum is to be advanced by the Export-Import Bank to cover Chinese purchases of American goods. The balance is to be provided by the US Treasury "for purposes of monetary protection and management as between American and Chinese currencies"; i.e. it will be devoted entirely to stabilization operations and will not be used to finance direct Chinese purchases in the American market. It is this part of the new loan which deserves very critical analysis.

Several months ago, when the international exchange value of the Chinese dollar took a sharp drop, the United States Treasury was asked to make a stabilization loan to China. After careful consideration, the Treasury refused, apparently for the following reasons: In the first place, Japan, which has been using every possible means to obtain Chinese legal tender in the occupied areas, would profit greatly from any increase in the exchange value of the Chinese dollar. In the second place, under present war conditions, China does not need a valuable currency to carry on her foreign trade. That trade is almost entirely on a barter basis, financed when necessary by commercial credits. So long as China remains at war, there is little likelihood of any expansion in her trade with the outside world. Therefore she has no urgent need to stabilize her currency in world markets. Finally, it is not true that currency inflation and rising prices in China are due to a lack of a stabilization fund. Rather, they are the result of the government's partial failure to institute and maintain an air-tight controlled currency and to check speculation and hoarding. In view of these considerations, the United States Treasury decided that under present war conditions additional commercial credits would be of far greater value to China than a stabilization fund.

These arguments against a stabilization loan to China are every bit as valid today as they were several months ago. The American people should not spend their money to enable Japan to obtain valuable foreign exchange, nor should they aid any particular groups in China to maintain the value of their private holdings.

This latest act of the American government, therefore, does not constitute real aid for China. Rather it is merely a continuation of the policy which the government has pursued throughout the Sino-Japanese war; that is, to help China just enough to keep Japan "busy," but never enough to help China become a strong and independent nation. The American government has talked in glowing terms of its "friendship for China" and has given a great deal of publicity to its generosity in extending loans of $70,000,000 (prior to the November 30 credit). Yet these loans were in reality only short term commercial credits, granted on none too favorable terms. They specifically prohibited the purchase of the very things China needed most—munitions and planes. It is not generally realized that China has only been able to use a small portion of these loans. The terms of repayment are too difficult and must take place only through the exports of Chinese commodities such as tungsten, antimony, tung oil, tin, etc.

If the American government were really sincere in its professed desire to help China, it would immediately grant extensive long term credits for Chinese purchases of planes, munitions, and other necessities. Moreover, it would stop draining China of her silver and mineral reserves. It would not spend $50,000,000 to benefit the possessors of Chinese dollar balances and speculators in foreign exchange. It is only after the war, when China is free to expand her foreign trade and pursue the task of economic reconstruction, that there will be a real need for stabilizing the Chinese currency.

When that time comes, the United States government might well make up for its silver purchase policy, which has drained China of her metallic reserves, by helping China to establish her currency on a metallic basis through extensive loans.

New York City. KATE MITCHELL.

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Rockwell Kent Tells His Story

The autobiography of one of America's staunchest champions of the people. Alvah Bessie discusses "This Is My Own" and points its moral. Other books reviewed.

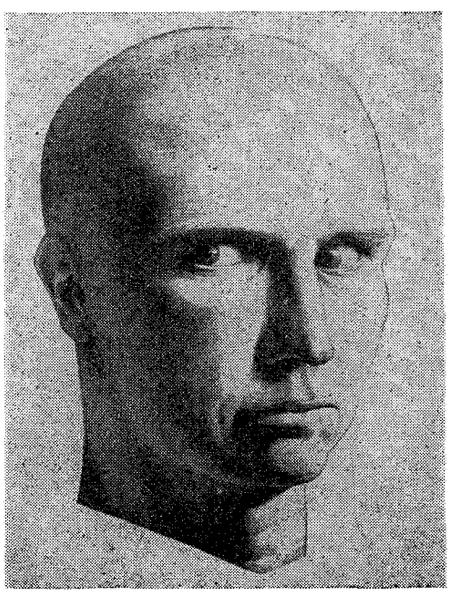
THIS IS MY OWN, *by Rockwell Kent. Duell, Sloan & Pearce. $3.50.*

AT FIFTY-EIGHT Rockwell Kent has written an autobiographical narrative that will make many a younger writer sit down and chew his nails. For the vitality of the man, as revealed in his writing and in his record, is almost incredible. Take a brief glance at the roster of his activities: painter, engraver, etcher, illustrator, book designer, writer, pamphleteer, farmer, typographer, explorer, union organizer, public speaker, architect, fighter-with-railroads, father, father-in-law, grandfather, world traveler, lecturer, linguist (in Eskimo), and in all things a natural-born rebel.

This Is My Own is a fable with a moral, as all fables are. It is also a true story of a really rampant individualist whose activities, peccadilloes and escapades, opinions and wisecracks have made cocktail gossip and may, quite likely, before he gets through with life, make history. For the man lives and enjoys life—and in this day and age, that is quite a lot. He is full of juice, he is cocky, he is egotistical, and he is quite generally sound. If he is a bit *too* cocky at times, if he is a bit *too* egotistical and parent-proud of his accomplishments, if he is even eccentric, he is also the first to admit these facts, with a grin upon his amiable pan. For his amiability is as much a constant as his irascibility, and though his emotions are very near the surface, they seem genuine.

What are his emotions, what has made him so violent and so gentle, so loving and so hating, so humble and so proud? He might answer that he is an artist, and an artist is an artist by virtue of his love of life, his *love*. It would be a sound reply. The man has worked hard, played hard, and in this tag-end of capitalist collapse, been exceptionally lucky. That is to say, he made a lot of money from his art once upon a time, and like any ordinary human being, decided to withdraw from the market-place and enjoy some peace of mind. To that end, he and his wife explored the Adirondacks (after living all over the globe) and built a house they presumptuously called *Asgaard*—farm of the gods. There they intended to work and live and keep the wide world out. But the world had a way of intruding (just as it has intruded upon the private life of many another seeking to be a recluse, an individual, an artist), and the Kents came out again.

The Delaware & Hudson Railroad had discontinued service on a branch line that the people of the Kents' community needed. A good many human beings would have taken



SELF PORTRAIT. *An original lithograph by Rockwell Kent.*

such an act of God lying down; not Kent. He fought the railroad, and he won. The county administration was corrupt; Kent fought it (with his neighbor farmers) and they lost. He fought for a union of creative artists and won; he fought for a Federal Bureau of Fine Arts and lost. He testified against a US prosecuting attorney in Puerto Rico, and helped to win freedom and life for twelve innocent men being railroaded by a reactionary government. He fought for Prestes in Brazil; he fought for the Vermont Marble Workers and they lost; he fought a whole pack of slanderers, calumniators, and gossip-mongers in and out of the Treasury Department over his murals for the Post Office in Washington; he has given Martin Dies a dressing down, and Coughlin, and Ford, and the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Girdlers, Weirs, and J. B. Matthews, and a host of others. For these were the men and these were the issues, plus unemployment and starvation, curtailment of civil liberties, China and Spain, Czechoslovakia and Hitler, war and conscription and the threat of war, which impinged upon the escape Kent sought on his farm of the gods, and brought him out fighting mad.

And that he is mad to a purpose, with a fine and sound American indignation, the most casual perusal of his book will demonstrate. The man is mad about the *right* things (in more than one sense of the word), and his almost unfailing sense of humor about his collectivist passions quite frequently will lead the reader through a brilliant piece of rhetorical fireworks, straight to a chuckle or a belly-laugh. The man may be a fanatic about justice and democracy and the American guarantees of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, but there is method in his madness, and anyhow these are pretty good things to be fanatical about. He is impatient with the promises of capitalism.

The essence of Kent, despite all idiosyncrasies of personality and rhetorical lyricism, is soundly American, soundly rebellious, soundly "subversive" of everything that tends to work against the best interests of the majority of our people. "With the stubbornness of fools whose minds . . . are closed to argument," he writes, ". . . with any category of stupidity or aberration of the mind you like, but still with the spirit and the vision and the faith of our revolutionary fathers, we cry: Give us life, liberty and happiness! And be damn quick about it." The word radical, Kent demonstrates, really comes from the Latin word for root. A radical is a person who attempts to get to the roots of things. In his book, Kent has got at the roots of American life, of the distortion of the rights proclaimed by those who founded this democracy. "This spirit of us fundamentalists in human rights George III and North termed revolutionary. Can we have sunk so low that people in America so term it now? And that when a poll-tax patriot from the feudal South denounces us in Washington the people cheer?" If it is true, he says, that Stalin backs those in America who fight for these rights, then ought we not, like our fathers who prayed that God should bless the king of France, shout, "God bless you, Stalin!" Well, as Kent has said, it seems to have come to such a pass that the expression of these ideas, of these really *radical* ideas, *has* become subversive—to the enemies of the people. For did they not forbid him to write the words of Lincoln upon his Washington mural?

The man then lists the really subversive organizations of which he is a member. Samples:

American Artists Congress (vice chairman)—subversive to the æsthetic and political sensibilities of the wealthy.

American Youth Congress—subversive to the world's being worse tomorrow than it is today.

International Labor Defense—subversive to conviction of the poor without due process.

International Workers' Order (vice president)—subversive to insecurity, poverty, ignorance and boredom.

The trouble with Rockwell Kent, as the blackguard even confesses, is that when a

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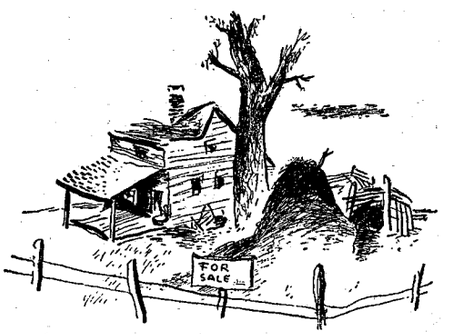
youth he came upon and read and *believed* the preamble of the Declaration of Independence. You know the song Earl Robinson and John Latouche wrote that is a best-seller on the records these days, and that begins: *we hold these truths to be self-evident.* Apparently—and after more than fifty years—Kent still believes in it! The man is positively dangerous.

ALVAH BESSIE.



Gropper

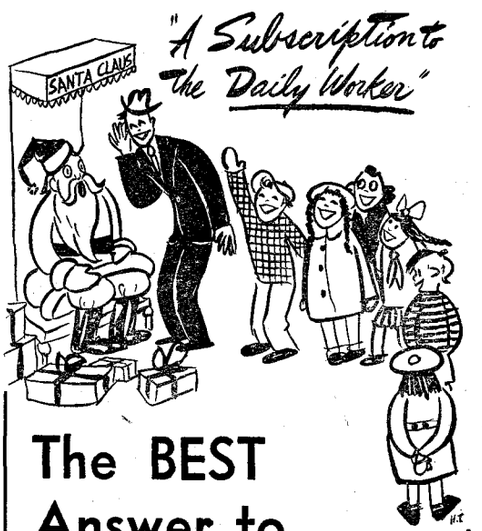
World War I

SONS OF THE FATHERS, *by Albert Halper. Harper. $2.50.*

SAUL BERGMAN fled czarist Russia to escape conscription. In America he married another immigrant, established a small grocery business, and raised a family. And in 1917, when his two eldest sons were of draft age, conscription descended upon America. The sons couldn't escape. Ben tried, and actually did succeed in staying out of uniform, but his very efforts forced him first onto a stony Montana homestead ("farmers won't be drafted") and then, when farmers were also drafted, to servitude in a military-uniform firm under the arrogant command of army officers. Milt died on a French battlefield, the news of his death reaching his parents on the eve of Armistice.

Albert Halper's story of the Bergmans opens with the family's celebration of Milt's first steps and closes with the *minyon,* Jewish religious services, for his death. But it is Saul, the father, who will make the most convincing claim on your attention and sympathy. For it is he (and Halper seems to know him well) who best expresses the helpless confusion of his immigrant people who thought themselves free from pogroms and conscription when they landed in America, only to come, three decades later, under another military dictatorship, another frenzy of national or racial "patriotism." What had the United States to do with this "European war"? What was this enormously rich country fighting for? With these questions Saul rages at Milt for believing the British-inspired atrocity tales, and prods Ben along the road of draft-evasion. And Milt, who answers his father with the easy phrases of the Creel committee, is finally sickened by his military experience into asking the same questions himself: Why? . . . why are we fighting? The query remains unanswered, for in those days there was scarcely anyone to answer it.

Americans who cannot remember 1917-18,



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or choose to forget it, should read Halper's account. Here are the war posters, the songs and slogans, Liberty Bonds, the delirium of terror and bravado, sincere and phony patriotism, high prices and profits, "Over There" and trench mud, farewell dances, casualty lists, spy hunts, gold stars, kiss-the-flag, kill-the-kaiser, give-till-it-hurts . . . to the final delirium of November 11, the dancing in the streets to celebrate victory and, most of all, the conviction that war itself had been conquered.

I wish that Halper had been clearer on the real, underneath causes of the war. Throughout the book there is an unfortunate emphasis on the idea that Europe—as opposed to America—was the monster mother of all war spirit. Halper himself says, in his preface, that he wanted to show Saul Bergman "believed that Europe with all her seemingly incurable ills was not worth the shedding of a single drop of American blood." The novel reveals only a very slight understanding that the Bergmans' despairing question, "What are we fighting for?" was the question of a class rather than a nationality, and it was asked in Europe as well as the United States. In one country, Saul Bergman's native land, the people did not wait for the end of the war to answer that question themselves.

BARBARA GILES.

Almighty Press

AP: THE STORY OF NEWS, *by Oliver Gramling. Farrar & Rinehart. $3.50.*

OLIVER GRAMLING, the author of this authorized biography of the Associated Press, issued with the blessing of Kent Cooper and dedicated to Frank B. Noyes, is an AP executive himself. The AP is as jealous of its executives as husbands in the middle ages who locked their wives in a trunk when they left on a business trip. An AP man who once wrote a book about contract bridge had to take his name off the title page and turn over his royalties to charity. But Gramling's book was an assignment, and he plodded through it as methodically as though he were describing the interpretation placed by informed circles in Bucharest on a dispatch from reliable informants in Budapest concerning a reported conversation between authoritative sources in Belgrade and the man in the street in Constantinople. He writes in the genuine, sluggish AP style, which has sometimes been likened to lava. Some people have called the AP pedestrian, but a snail on a hot day is frisky compared to its style.

Gramling proceeds inexorably from 1848 to the Munich Pact of 1939, and if he skips anything on the way he is not aware of it. Maybe because of the style, maybe because of the author's feeling that the AP is a kind of religious body, in 500 pages he does not include much information about the AP. It is almost a *tour de force*. He examines the AP news reports of the last ninety years and makes a list of what the executives of

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the time considered big stories. Any news which occurred more than a week ago, however, is history, and Oliver Gramling is no historian. Most history books bring up things which weren't apparent to contemporaries because of the limitations of agencies of information like the AP. There was also more to the last war than got into AP cables. Several congressional committees have taken evidence that the war was not, in fact, caused primarily by the frightfulness of German submarines, as was reported at the time. To avoid disillusionment, the AP never became enthusiastic about these committees. A committee discovered a cablegram to Woodrow Wilson from Walter Hines Page, the American ambassador in London, declaring that J. P. Morgan and Co. would be ruined if America didn't go to war. The AP never sent out the text of the cablegram.

The success of *The Story of News* in the bookstores is an illustration of what can be accomplished by ballyhoo. It is almost wholly without merit: it is ponderous, disjointed, and naive. Nevertheless it is selling well because of a terrific advertising budget and cooperation from the book reviewers on the AP's 1,437 member papers. Some papers even announced its publication in news stories. Despite the fact that the UP and INS come in for a lot of cracks from Gramling—he calls them "commercial agencies" and the AP invariably beats them to the draw—even reviewers working for Howard and Hearst praised it. A book, on the other hand, which cast doubt on the AP's immaculate conception and suggested that like other American business institutions it is something short of perfect, would have considerable trouble finding a publisher.

The Associated Press was conceived in sin and brought forth in hypocrisy. It assumed its present composition because certain reactionary publishers at the turn of the century desired to evade taxes and avoid regulation as a public utility. It was reorganized slightly in 1927 but it is still controlled by a handful of large papers—New York *Sun,* Chicago *Tribune,* Atlanta *Constitution,* Los Angeles *Times*—whose political views are well known to AP employees. A man does not work for the AP long without finding out that the way to get ahead in the organization is to write dispatches which can be proudly featured on page one by Harry Chandler of the Los Angeles *Times.* In towns too small to have an AP bureau the local AP correspondent is an executive on the AP paper, and inasmuch as well over half the small papers in the United States are owned outright by private industry and the rest are semi-official organs of the local Chamber of Commerce, the truth has two strikes on it before it gets started. That is why AP news from the South is about as reliable as AP news from the European war zone. In the course of years critics have compiled an imposing list of cases where AP correspondents covering strikes have been strike-breakers, correspondents covering lynchings

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have worn nightshirts, correspondents covering vigilantes have been vigilantes. Such cases are not typical. The AP's bias, in contradiction to the Tartuffian oratory every spring from the stuffed shirts on its board of directors, is more subtle. It is what is left out, not what is put in. The AP is anti-labor, but it never says so and it only calls strikers a mob under severe provocation. It has fought its own workers and its news report has slandered the workers of every country in the world. The latest instance is reported by *In Fact:* the CIO strikers at Vultee Aircraft issued a statement accusing Major Sidney Simpson, the government conciliator representing the War Department, of being drunk during negotiations. The AP sent out the CIO's statement and fifteen minutes later killed it dead.

The AP has exchange agreements with Reuters, Havas, Domei, Canadian Press, and the other official and semi-official news agencies abroad, and its foreign news is a reflection of the opinion of civil services and European foreign offices. The AP has always had only one man in India, depending for news of that country upon Reuters, which depended upon the British viceroy. Censors have no terrors for the AP. The way the British censorship works is well known: when the present Duke of Windsor was courting the present duchess there was never a direct order from the prime minister telling publishers to keep the news out of the papers, but the news didn't get into the papers till the prime minister released it. The AP's Washington bureau is familiar with this unspoken censorship. If the AP man on the State Department run reveals information given him in confidence by Sumner Welles or hesitates to raise Sumner Welles' helmet above the level of the trenches to see if it is then riddled with bullets, Sumner Welles will refuse to speak to him and he will have to get another job.

The AP, like all monopolies, has an inner compulsion to expand. Just now it is fighting tooth and nail with Reuters and the UP over the carcass of Havas, which once had a sphere of influence in South America. As a matter of fact, the story of the AP and the story of news are also the story of American capital. At the start the AP took advantage of new inventions to increase the thoroughness and speed of news, but for twenty years it has stagnated, taking in more territory like an expanding swamp, getting along with fewer employees. Now it uses inventions, not to improve its service, but to cut its labor costs, and it has become identical with a decaying economic system and the system's political expression in Washington and Westminster. This story Oliver Gramling does not tell. DANIEL TODD.

Soriano

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What Is a Savo?

The strange art of Jimmy Savo, a cross between Charlie Chaplin and the Fratellini Brothers. Reviews of the movies, the ballet, and Ray Lev's music.

IT IS almost impossible to describe in words the art of Jimmy Savo, which he displayed briefly at the Belmont in a one-man show. It had to be seen to be believed, understood, and appreciated. Call the man a pantomimist and you have said nothing; call him a clown, and you have added little more. He is a tragic clown, and he is a brilliant pantomimist. What he does, all alone on a stage, falls somewhere in between the work of the Fratellini Brothers at their best (at their worst, they were dreadful) and Charlie Chaplin, yet he reminds you of neither.

Picture a stage bare of all props but a few flowers stuck in the floor. Enter Savo dressed as a Swedish maiden; a flopping gown, a mop of blonde wool hair, no makeup on his extraordinary face. He proceeds to indicate that he is happy, that he is a Swedish maiden, that he (she) is going to church, is delighted by youth, happiness, the sun, the air, the flowers. She picks some. After picking a few her back aches; she rests, dreams (with her face and body) about her lover, and is summoned to the serious business of church by offstage bells. That is all. But that is only one of many acts in which Jimmy appears in insane costumes and externalizes a series of rigidly controlled emotions that are relative to what a hospital porter would do with a patient if the surgeon were called away, a washerwoman in love, an exhausted levee worker on the shores of Ol' Man River, Eve in the Garden of Eden (magnificent), *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* of Moliere courting an invisible maiden, a fisherman in a boat, a starving man on the Bowery, a jester trying to amuse a king.

Jimmy Savo

The man is a very fine actor. Many of these sketches come off, and when they do they are the product of consummate artistry. Some of them do not, and taken all together, they are too much Savo for one evening—but only because the range of his emotions is not wide enough for an entire evening. But what he does is instinct with charm, with a glad-sad personality revealed by a strangely expressive body and a wonderfully mobile and very strange face. Watch him carefully and you will learn a great deal about the art of the actor—the means he utilizes to express (without words in this case) what he is feeling, what he wants to say. Savo ranges from the broadest burlesque slapstick through deep convictions of social injustice. In the latter he is not always entirely successful, but he is successful enough to infect you with his feeling. So it is a pity you will have to wait till Christmas week to see him.

ALVAH BESSIE.

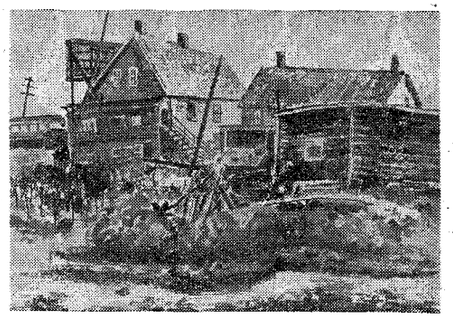
"Blackout"

A new English picture about espionage and intrigue.

IN *Blackout*, a new English picture, two adventuresome English spies are chased around London by a gang of blackhearted Teutons, and if you think the German secret service is going to put anything over on the British secret service, you are mistaken. Conrad Veidt plays the romantic lead, a Danish sea captain who chases after the English spies, one of whom is a cute girl. The picture proceeds rapidly, and it doesn't dwell too lovingly on the coolness and imperturbability of upper-class Englishmen when they are strung up by their thumbs by German spies.

Among other things its action isn't worked out carefully, making impossible situations seem really impossible. The best sequences deal with the arrogance of the English in charge of control ports, which, the picture points out, at least is better than the brutality of the Germans in U-Boats. I don't feel that I must make up my mind on this question. The purpose of blockade is starvation, and it is not material whether this is accomplished by submarines or by contraband control.

The Globe (where I saw the movie recently) is gradually assuming the appearance of Broadway's British house. Another British melodrama "by the same studio which made *The Lady Vanishes*" was announced. The British, with their memories of the harsh things said in America about their propaganda in the last war, never go so far as the pro-British Americans in Hollywood, and *Blackout* assays less propaganda to the ounce than Hollywood pictures like *Foreign Correspondent* and *Arise My Love*. Naturally this does not make the propaganda more palatable. In the lobby of the *Globe* there was an interesting exhibit arranged by that wistful organization, the American Committee for Defense of British Homes, which solicits firearms from American citizens. A number of weapons had already been donated, one of which to my lay eye looked like a muzzle-loader. A poster declared, " 'We will fight with pitchforks if need be,' says Lord Beaverbrook." So far as I was able to see no one has yet donated a pitchfork.



BACK YARD: *One of Ben Yomen's water colors at the State, County, and Municipal Workers headquarters in Brooklyn.*

DANIEL TODD.

Ray Lev's Music

Lou Cooper reviews her recent concert at Town Hall.

ONE of my favorite pianists, Ray Lev, played at Town Hall last week. She is the young Brooklyn artist who created quite a stir in the concert world at her debut seven years ago. Even at that time, some observers were distressed at Miss Lev's discovery that the piano is not a spinet or a clavichord but an instrument capable of large sonorities and wide tonal shadings. Miss Lev, a performer with wide sweep and power, has always taken advantage of the modern piano's possibilities. And what a pleasure it is to hear this kind of playing in preference to the timid, pseudo-poetic salonisms to which certain of our renowned pianists are addicted. Her highly commendable qualities of rhythmic verve, positiveness plus a steady undercurrent of excitement were expertly brought forward in the playing of the Brahms "Scherzo in E-Flat Minor." But Miss Lev is not only a grandiose performer. She is capable of some beautiful lyrical and tender playing as witness her readings of the Andante from the Schumann "G Minor Sonata," two Chopin Mazurkas,

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and the Franck "Prelude, Chorale and Fugue."

At the root of her lyrical and moving rhythmic styles lies a keen musical intelligence. She delineated the adventures of the "32 Beethoven Variations" in analytical and lucid manner. It is in this sense of relation and development of musical phrases that Miss Lev excels and where so many pianists fail.

Nor do technical problems contain any mysteries for her. However, the question of touch is a subtle one. Whether you enjoy a pianist who uses the sharp, brilliant, incisive touch or what is termed a "velvety" touch is probably a matter of personal preference. I have always found the velvety sensation more pleasant. In actual usage both forms have to be employed according to the needs and nature of the composition. Miss Lev too often utilizes only the strident approach. I think Miss Lev would be a more rounded artist if she found more occasion to alternate these methods. For all that, the near future ought to see Miss Lev emerge as a "first lady of the piano."

LOU COOPER.

Ballet Ballot

A round-up of some current dance features.

THE dance season has begun, and from the looks of things Broadway has been captured by the Ballet, currently housed at the 51st Street Theater, impresarioed by the indefatigable Sol Hurok, and planning an indefinite stay at pretty steep prices.

There are those who regard ballet as a glorified leg show and others who prize it as the Sacrosanct Synthesis of the Arts. This reviewer, while ardent, nevertheless wavers, a little to be sure, toward the first of the two poles, convinced that one needn't be too profoundly initiated into the mysteries to find it a gratifying evening's entertainment.

True, the librettos are stupid: passion in a fairy-tale court, fervent programmatic notes about the Almighty Absolutes—these so-called synopses shrivel away into embarrassing nonsense under even the mildest analysis. To establish a criterion for judging ballet as we see it under the ægis of its present stockholders, therefore, is to know how to recognize skillful and imaginative application of ballet's codified formulae, to distinguish taste in style, costume and *decors*, and to appreciate technical proficiency in performance.

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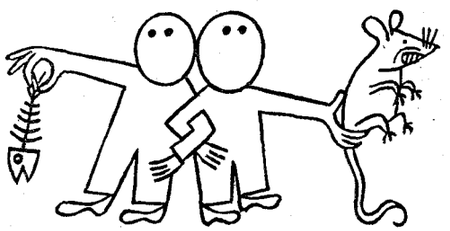


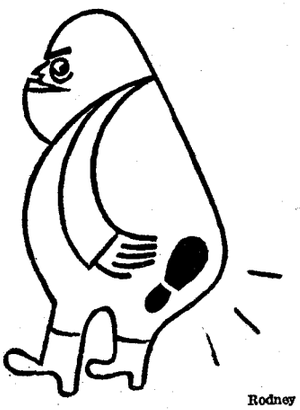
a ballet on a contemporary theme, but he has applied contemporary approaches to his librettos.

He has imbued *Paganini* with character, with dramatic effectiveness, with astute psychological overtones, so that the three scenes in the life of the diabolic virtuoso, set to Paganini's own "23rd Caprice," orchestrated for piano and orchestra by Rachmaninoff, transcends balletic cliches, and emerges as a choreographic triumph. It is not on the level of Chaplin's *Dictator* or Picasso's *Guernica,* but relatively, within its own idiom, *Paganini* is a masterpiece.

La Lute Eternelle, the Eternal Struggle (Igor Schwezoff's libretto and choreography), "depicts the struggle of a man against the wretchedness and helplessness of Mankind. He is misled by Illusion and held up by Obsessions, but through Visions of Beauty and Truth, he acquires Will Power and thus becomes the Victor." Well, to resolve a little dainty like that in terms of dancing to Schumann's *Etudes Symphoniques,* is itself a struggle. The dancers work like beavers, but the choreography bogs down in all sorts of pseudo-contrapuntal devices.

Graduation Ball, on the other hand, pretends little and accomplishes much. David Lichine, choreographer, who also dances excellently in his own work, came through with a charming and ingratiating piece. If you liked *Le Beau Danube* and *Gaiete Parisienne* and cadets flirting with giggling girls, you'll love this opus. Tatiania Riabouchinskaya, in this ballet, as well as in *Paganini,* is a pleasure to watch.

The TAC Dance Cabaret, held in a theater ill-suited for dancing, drew an overflow crowd. The program was unequal in merit, with Jack Cole and Lotte Goslar sharing honors. Mr. Cole is an unexcelled performer. His highly theatricalized impressions of South American and Balinese dancing are superb, and his audience titillates with excitement while he is on stage. Lotte Goslar is unique in other



Rodney

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ways. A badly lighted stage washed away the delicate wit of *Waltz Mania,* but *Wood Sprite,* a mad piece of cartooning, received its usual ovation.

Pete Nugent, Negro tap dancer, and Arthur Mahoney, with his partner Thalia Mara, are new to these programs. Pete Nugent, despite distinctive and stylish tapping, strikes no fire. Mahoney's performance lacks dynamics; his unvarying intensity grows monotonous. Kathleen O'Brien and John Stark, a young and gifted duo, should add some new numbers to their repertoire; *Indian Dance* and *Saturday Night* have been going the rounds for almost a year now.

Katharine Dunham is *not* the Marian Anderson of the dance, but her performance in *Cabin in the Sky,* and her group of dancers, deserve passing mention, even with Balanchine as dance director for the presentation attempting to "simonize" them. For my part, the most exciting sections were the unpretentious movement accompanying the singing of "Dem Bones" and sections of "Lazy Steps" and "Boogy Woogy"—which would have been equally exciting without benefit of Balanchine.

To those who wait with bated breath for the Sunday night modern dance recital schedule, a word of prophecy. Look away from Broadway. A recital on that street has become increasingly prohibitive for the unsubsidized dancer. These really brave and determined artists are tackling their problems elsewhere. Tamiris, one of our leading militants, has planned a series of recitals at her New York studio. Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman intend to do intimate theater programs in a newly constructed Manhattan headquarters. Anna Sokolow is back from Mexico with a brilliant record of achievement in that country and exciting projects planned for this one. The "Y" series on 92nd Street, New York, has somehow forgotten about the younger dancer, but it still enables the average concert-goer to attend programs of top notchers at popular prices.

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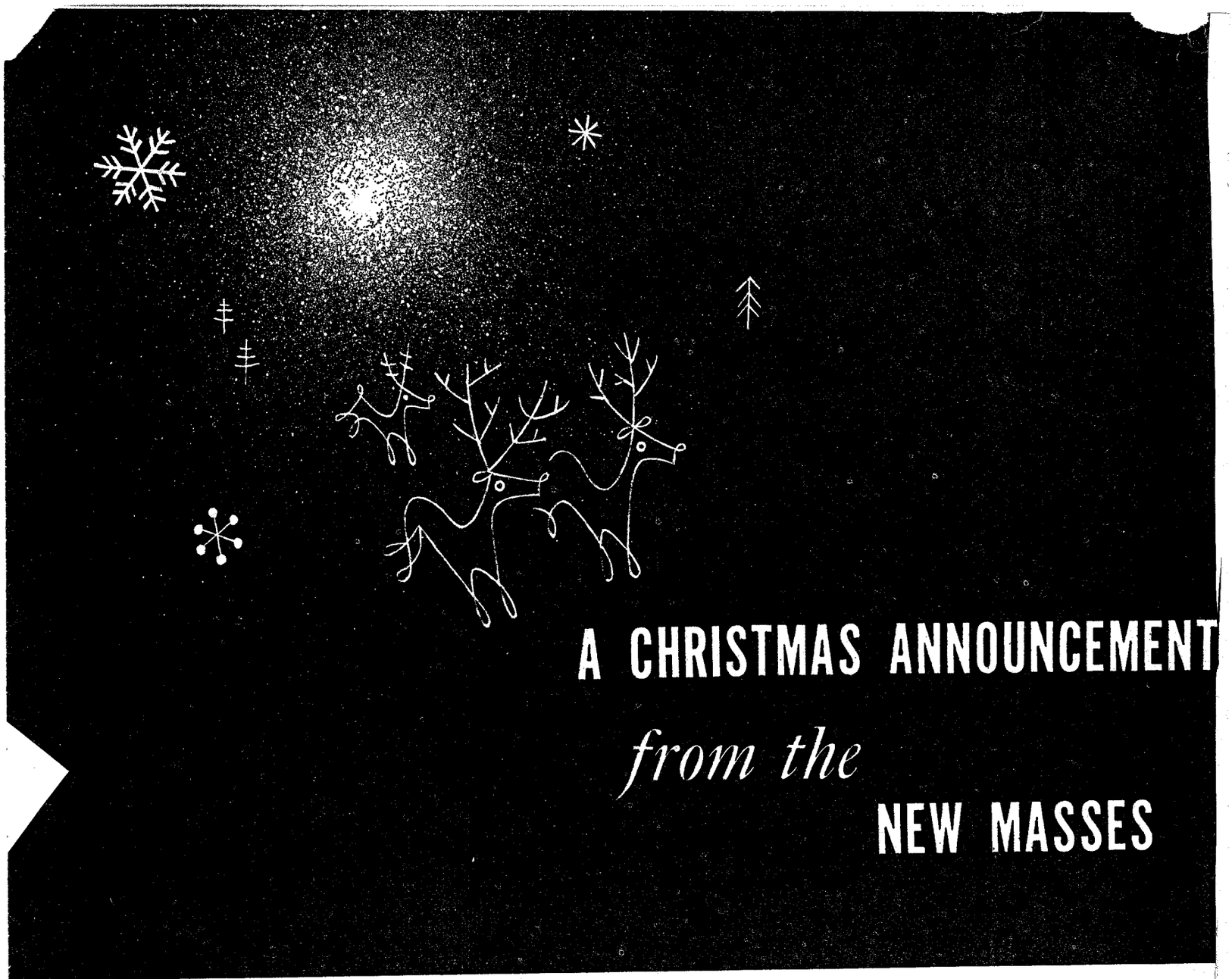

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